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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-025 *6 February 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Issues Statement on UN-Iraq Oil Talks

NC0502164196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1445 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Feb (MENA)—The Arab League Secretariat General has reiterated its call for settling all outstanding issues from the Gulf crisis within the framework of international and Arab legitimacy, in order to restore solidarity within a clear-cut pan-Arab reconciliation, taking all Arab countries' national interests into consideration.

In a statement issued today, the secretariat general said it will be following with great interest the talks scheduled to begin at UN headquarters between Iraq and the UN secretary general. The talks are aimed at reaching agreement on the formula of "oil for food" which is regarded as an important step toward easing the fraternal Iraqi people's suffering.

The secretariat general expressed its hope that the two sides will reach an acceptable formula, enabling Iraq to meet its needs and requirements. It also asserted the Arab League's concern about Iraq's safety, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

The league's secretariat general also welcomed the UN secretary general's statement on 1 February, after receiving Saudi Ambassador in Washington Prince Bandar Bin-Sultan on this issue.

Iraq Signs Arab League Human Rights Charter in Cairo

NC0502171496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1525 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Feb (MENA)—Iraq signed the Arab human rights charter at the Arab League Secretariat General today. The charter was ratified by the Arab League Council in its 102d session in 1994. Iraq is the first Arab country to sign the charter.

The charter was signed for Iraq by Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent delegate at the Arab League, and for the Arab League by Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Buhayri, head of its legal department.

In a statement to MENA, Dr. Najm said Iraq's signature confirms the Iraqi Government's policy on preserving Arab and Islamic values concerning man and his dignity and rights.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat on Jerusalem, PNC, Other Issues

MM0602115296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
6 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Interview with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat by Khayrallah Khayrallah in Davos, Switzerland, on 3 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Khayrallah] Now that you have been overwhelmingly elected as president, how will this be translated at the Palestinian level, that is with regard to rectifying Palestinian conditions in general?

['Arafat] Without doubt we are going through historic circumstances. First, we are approaching a dialogue with the Israelis over the final phase, the most important and serious phase. Because in this phase the right to self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital will be determined. The four main issues to be addressed are: holy Jerusalem; the old refugees [al-laji'in al-qudama] issue, as we consider the 1967 emigrants, and there is now a quadripartite Jordanian-Egyptian-Israeli-Palestinian committee discussing that issue; the settlements; and the final border.

To speak openly and clearly, there are still numerous outstanding issues, such as the safe corridor between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Israelis continue to procrastinate in this connection. And there is the issue of the prisoners, especially women prisoners, in addition to the economic conditions. As I mentioned today, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were closed on 247 days over 15 months.

[Khayrallah] On 247 days?!

['Arafat] Yes, 247 days over 15 months. Our daily losses from these closures total at least $6 million. I am saying our daily losses. This means that our losses exceed all the Palestinian people's donations. There are also other difficulties facing us. Nevertheless, our consolation, despite the numerous difficulties facing us, is our people's great determination and noble stand. This stand was reflected in the brilliant rush to participate in the elections. More than 85 percent of our people inside [the self-rule areas] took part. This huge number of brothers and sisters who participated in the elections represents a bright spot on the Palestinian march, whether with regard to the Palestinian Legislative Council [PC] elections or the presidential elections.

[Khayrallah] But how will that be translated at the Palestinian domestic level?

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['Arafat] We hope it will convene now if the Israelis allow it to convene and do not put obstacles in the way of the PNC members' return. We hope it will convene on Palestinian territory.

[Khayrallah] With regard to Jordan, you visited Amman recently. Has there been any development in relations?

['Arafat] I am grateful to His Majesty King Husayn, who, while seeing me off at the airport, stressed an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, even though I cited to him the 1983 PNC decision to establish a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation on the basis of the free will of the two fraternal peoples. He told me: We will think about it when the Palestinian state is established. I thanked him for this position.

[Khayrallah] What about your recent visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

['Arafat] Actually since His Majesty King Fahd suffered a health problem I have been in touch with my brothers in the Saudi leadership: Crown Prince 'Abdallah, Prince Sultan (second deputy prime minister and defense and aviation minister), Prince Salman (amir of the Riyadh region), Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal (foreign minister), and other princes to assure myself about the health of my brother Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Fahd. I assured myself about his health during my recent visit to the Kingdom. I am proud of the cordial and blessed relationship binding me to my brothers in the Kingdom. Despite their difficult circumstances at this time, they have not hesitated for one moment to provide aid to the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], and they will not stop doing so despite their difficult circumstances.

[Khayrallah] What would you say to those who boycotted the elections, first and foremost Hamas?

['Arafat] They did not boycott [the elections]. Five of their candidates won seats in the elections...is that a small number? Five....

[Khayrallah] But the leadership boycotted....

['Arafat] No. In practice they did not. How come five of them won? I deliberately left two seats for them in Gaza. I put on the list — Fatah's list — which should have included 12 candidates, only 10 candidates so as to give them the chance to have a presence, and I am happy with their presence.

[Khayrallah] Are you satisfied with the course of events in the areas under PNA control?

['Arafat] Praise be to God, praise be to God. True, economic conditions are difficult because numerous promises made by the donor states have not been fulfilled. But this is the practice in all Third World countries, and I am part of the Third World. However, I am banking on our people, who are bearing the difficulties resolutely and patiently, because we are building the foundations for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

[Khayrallah] What is your position on the issue concerning the 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp and Abu-Mihjan [Palestinian suspected of killing Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi] in Lebanon?

['Arafat] I am against what Abu-Mihjan did. That operation is immoral and criminal. He is not entitled at all to attack anyone, even if he differs with him politically. The Lebanese Government is entitled to take whatever measure it deems suitable in this connection.

We will, God willing, hold talks with my brothers in Lebanon in order to move some of the brother [Palestinian] military personnel from southern Lebanon [to the self-rule areas].

[Khayrallah] How many of them will be moved to the West Bank and Gaza?

['Arafat] So far the Israelis have agreed for 300 to be moved. We submitted 1,200 names.

[Khayrallah] What about relations with Syria? Has there been anything new?

['Arafat] I am happy with the fact that I am in contact touch with my brothers in the Syrian leadership. And I am happy with the progress they have achieved and are achieving in the negotiations with Israel.

PLO Executive Committee Meets in Egypt

NC0602094296 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO Executive Committee opened a two-day meeting in al-'Arish [in Egypt] last night. The committee, chaired by Yasir 'Arafat, will discuss inviting the Palestine National Council to hold a session to discuss the Palestinian National Charter. The committee will also discuss results of last month's Palestinian presidential and legislative elections and the formation of a new Palestinian government. The committee will also debate Israel's withdrawal from Hebron and issues related to the final-status negotiations, scheduled to start in May. The Voice of Palestine said that 11 of the 18 Executive Committee members attended yesterday's meeting. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine announced that they are boycotting the meeting.

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PLO Executive Committee Postpones Call For PNC Meeting

JN0602083796 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 6 Feb 96

[Report by Muna Salim in al-'Arish]

[FBIS Translated Text] After a long meeting that lasted until dawn today, the PLO Executive Committee decided to postpone calling the Palestine National Council [PNC] to convene to discuss amending the Palestinian National Charter.

PLO Executive Committee member 'Abdallah Hurani said the postponement is due to the fact that amending the charter is not yet an urgent issue. He added that this issue will be discussed again at successive Executive Committee meetings after 'Id al-Fitr [approximately 20 February].

According to Palestinian sources close to the meeting, Israel asked that 12 articles in the Palestinian National Charter be amended. These articles stipulate that Palestine's borders are those which existed under the British mandate.

The same sources said that the Executive Committee members debated several proposals to find a compromise between Israel's insistence on amending the charter as a condition for negotiations on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, and the need for a formula for such an amendment that will satisfy the Palestinian people, particularly the refugees in the diaspora who fear they will be sacrificed as part of a bargain with Israel.

Among the proposals is an idea to replace the entire charter with a Palestinian constitution that can be used as the key reference for Palestinians inside and outside the territories. Another approach is to amend the current charter, as has been said by Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

[Begin Abu-Rudaynah recording] Some Palestinians believe that amendments were actually made through the 1988 PNC resolutions and the acceptance of the Bush initiative in 1991. Others say the PNC should confirm these amendments, because no one can cancel the provisions of the Palestinian National Charter, but it is possible to confirm the amendments made through the PNC resolutions. [end recording]

The Executive Committee will conclude its work this morning.

PLO Executive Committee Decides To Convene PNC 'Very Soon'

JN0602113396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO Executive Committee decided in al-'Arish today to convene the Palestine National Council [PNC]. No date for this meeting has been set, but sources close to the PLO said it will be held very soon. The sources did not rule out holding the meeting in March or April, at the latest. The PNC meeting will focus on amending the National Charter's articles that call for the destruction of Israel. In order for the amendment to be valid, it must be approved by two-thirds of the PNC members.

PLO Executive Committee Meets Amid 'Major Splits'

NC0602122696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1125 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] al-'Arish, 6 Feb (MENA)—The PLO Executive Committee resumed its meetings under the chairmanship of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat this morning. The meetings started Monday [5 February] night.

Sources close to the meetings said the conferees, 11 out of 18 PLO Executive Committee members, have not yet made a decision on calling the 450-member Palestine National Council to meet to discuss abolishing a clause in the Palestinian National Charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

This, the sources said, shows major splits in the committee, although the members attending the meetings are supporters of President Yasir 'Arafat. The absence of PLO Political Department Chief Faruq Qaddumi and six other Executive Committee members from the meetings clearly shows strong opposition inside the committee, the highest PLO executive organ.

A statement on the results and decisions of the meetings on a number of agenda topics is expected later. The committee is discussing the formation of a Palestinian government, Palestinian action after the legislative elections, Israel's withdrawal from Hebron by March, and negotiations with Israel for a final settlement. These final-status negotiations stipulate that the text providing for Israel's destruction be abolished from the Palestinian National Charter.

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Palestinian Muhammad 'Abbas Seeks To Attend PNC Meeting on Charter

TA0502173596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu-al-'Abbas [Muhammad 'Abbas], head of the terrorist group that hijacked the Achille Lauro, wishes to attend the Palestine National Council [PNC] meeting that will deal with amending the clauses of the Palestinian Charter. 'Abbas, who is apparently hiding in Iraq, justified his decision by the need to maintain the unity of the Palestinian nation.

Palestinian Authority To Seek Approval To Import Oil From Iraq

TA0402080396 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 1 Feb 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, QUDS PRESS — Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, the Palestinian finance minister, has said that Jordan is ready to provide the Palestinian Authority with its oil requirements — other than from Iraqi sources — if the Jordanian Government receives an official request to do so.

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, al-Nashashibi said: We expect new developments on the issue of Iraqi oil exports after the upcoming negotiations with the United Nations. If Iraq begins to export its oil, we will submit an immediate request to the relevant committee to obtain permission to import Iraqi oil instead of the oil that we are importing through Israel.

'Arafat Appoints Committee To Draw Up Constitution

TA0402105996 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 4 Feb 96 pp 1, 22

[Report by 'Imad al-Ifranji]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has decided to form a committee to draw up a constitution for the regime. The committee will be comprised of Salim al-Za'nun, Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Furayh Abu-Middayn, Ibrahim al-Daghmah, Dr. Anis al-Qasim and Judge Eugene al-Qasim, professors of constitutional law at al-Azhar and al-Najah Universities, Dr. Kamil Mansur, from Bi'r Zayt University's Legal Science Center, Farid al-Jallad, and Fatih 'Azzam. The Palestinian Ministry of Justice is to make the necessary preparations for the committee meeting.

Hamas Official on Post-Election Phase, Palestinian Authority Leadership

JN0302142896 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 5 Feb 96 p 5

[Interview with Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative in Jordan, by Muhammad Sabir in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Sabir] You boycotted the Palestinian elections and rejected their results. How do you assess the post-election phase and how will you deal with it?

[Nazzal] The Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement has a strategic view of the nature of the conflict with the Zionist occupation on the land of Palestine. Consequently, we follow a strategic program. I do not think this program will be affected by the elections, which represent a transient development that did not add anything to the reality of the Palestinian people. The leadership that concluded the Oslo accords on behalf of the Palestinian people is the same leadership that will conclude other agreements. All there is to the elections is that this leadership is now armed with their results to contend that it is a legitimate leadership. Therefore, the Hamas Movement will continue to follow its strategic program, which is essentially based on resisting the occupation until it is driven out of Palestinian land.

[Sabir] In view of the elections, what is your current attitude toward the Palestinian Authority [PA] and how are you dealing with it?

[Nazzal] The Hamas Movement dealt with the PA even before the elections. Therefore, it is only natural that we will continue to deal with it. However, the fact that we deal with it is dictated by facts on the ground. We live on one soil with many forces and it is impossible for us not to deal with these forces one way or another. This, however, does not mean recognizing the legitimacy of the other side.

[Sabir] Does this mean that, in your view, the PA leadership is not legitimate?

[Nazzal] For any side to win the legitimacy of representing the Palestinian people, it must be elected by all sectors of the Palestinian people inside and outside the territories. The PA was elected only from inside the territories, not from abroad.

[Sabir] Since you view the PA as not legitimate, why do you deal with it and talk to it?

[Nazzal] Dialogue is a civilized and realistic means to solve problems and settle disputes. Many countries declare war on each other and fight and at the same time

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they hold a dialogue. This does not mean approving the program of the other side.

[Sabir] So the Hamas Movement will not change its policy despite the elections and the new reality they yielded?

[Nazzal] The resistance policy is supposed to continue. [passage omitted]

[Sabir] What is Hamas' position on martyrdom operations in the wake of the martyrdom of Yahya 'Ayyash? Will it launch attacks within the PA-controlled territory?

[Nazzal] The resistance is continuing. It expresses itself in many forms. The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, the military wing of the Hamas Movement, is the side that carries out operations. Therefore, it is the one to choose the time and place.

[Sabir] Did your boycott of the elections weaken you politically and on the level of the masses?

[Nazzal] It is too early to give a judgment in this regard. However, I do not think the elections weakened the Hamas Movement. Hamas is not a new movement on the Palestinian street. It was launched along with the intifadah. It has its supporters. I think the funeral of martyr Yahya 'Ayyash and the demonstrations and marches in the West Bank confirm the mass support for the movement and its influence on the Palestinian street.

The Hamas Movement will take part in the Palestinian municipal elections. We have begun preparations for them. Since the start of the occupation, we have maintained that we do not object to holding municipal elections. This is because we think these elections are geared toward services in the first place. [passage omitted]

[Sabir] You are not members in the Palestine National Council [PNC]. However, the return of PNC members and holding a session to amend the Palestinian National Charter is now a subject of debate. What is your opinion of this?

[Nazzal] We knew that the Palestinian Council that would be elected in the territories would be a prelude to the cancellation of the National Charter. Today, there is talk about the return of the PNC members to convene a session and revoke the National Charter. This is a bribe offered by the occupation to the PNC members. This means that the National Charter will be canceled in exchange for the return of the PNC members. We are not members of the PLO. However, we think the National Charter includes some important points, which stress the Palestinian people's right to their land. Therefore, we reject such steps and consider them part of a political process that seeks to liquidate the Palestine question. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Hamas Official on Avenging 'Ayyash, Ties With PA

NC0602120496 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 30 Jan 96 p 9

[Report on interview with Khalid Mish'al, chairman of Hamas' Political Bureau and delegation head in talks with the PA, by 'Abd-al-Nasir Salamah in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is at the forefront of the Palestinian opposition groups that boycotted the presidential and legislative elections recently held in the Palestinian territories. The Palestinian National Authority's [PA] efforts to make Hamas change its stand coincided with the assassination of Engineer Yahya 'Ayyash, a Hamas leader and the brains behind the armed operations against the Israeli occupation. This put the Hamas leaders in a difficult position since retaliation would have spoiled the elections, while remaining silent would make Israel persist with its aggressive practices, especially these liquidation operations.

AL-AHRAM met in the Jordanian capital, Amman, with Khalid Mish'al, chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau and head of its delegation to the talks with the PA. The first question was: Did Hamas strike a balance between these developments? He replied: The assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash was not an easy or simple operation but a major one. The response to it therefore must be as significant. [passage omitted]

On the type of relations between the PA and Hamas in light of what they achieved in the Cairo dialogue, Khalid Mish'al said: Although Hamas believes that the Oslo agreements are illegal and do not represent our people, we cannot ignore the reality imposed with the might of the international community. We said from the first day the PA came into existence that we would not fight it but will oppose it with all legitimate means. We excluded a clash with it in order to protect the blood of our people and out of respect for the sanctity of Palestinian blood. Palestinian infighting is a Zionist objective. We will work in the future to maintain channels of contact and dialogue with the PA to ensure its commitment to respect the rules of pluralism and democracy and to stop its repressive practices against the opposition.

Regarding Hamas' stand on the negotiations for the final solution between the PA and Israel, Mish'al said: These negotiations are an inseparable part of the Oslo agreement. They represent the most important phase in

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it. The objective of inducing the PA into accepting the Oslo agreement was to enable the Zionists to normalize their relations with the Arab countries, weaken the PA stand and deprive it of all its negotiating cards, impose the fait accompli by increasing and expanding the settlements and consolidating the annexation of Jerusalem, and remove any real substance from the issue of the refugees and sovereignty by establishing the principle of compensations or the refugees' resettlement. At the same time, the PA was given nominal symbols of sovereignty such as "a flag, currency, a port, and an airport" while the Zionists continue to maintain real sovereignty through their control of the border crossing points, most of the water resources, and most of the West Bank territories on the pretext of protecting the settlements.

On whether the committee formed by Hamas to investigate the assassination of 'Ayyash has achieved any new results, Khalid Mish'al said: The enemy's organs undoubtedly planned and executed the assassination. But we believe that this operation would not have been carried out had there not been collaboration between these organs and some senior officers in the PA's security services. We have some indications and evidence that confirm this; we will reveal them once our security organs complete their investigations. [passage omitted]

Asked whether Hamas could agree to a dialogue with Israel, Mish'al said: The negotiations held with the Palestinian leadership and the results reached so far prove that the Zionists only want the Palestinian people to raise the flag of capitulation and accept all their humiliating conditions. Hence we do not agree to a dialogue with them from this angle. But if by dialogue we mean negotiations over humanitarian issues such as the exchange of prisoners, then we have no objection on the condition that there are international mediators.

On whether Hamas receives instructions from some countries, such as Iran, Mish'al said: Hamas is completely independent in its political decisions and all its affairs. It is a Palestinian movement that emanates from the people's interest and rights. Establishing ties with various Arab, Islamic, and international parties does not mean being dependent on this or that party. It believes that the Palestinian issue is linked to the Arab and Islamic situation. The movement's relations with Iran do not deviate from this context.

Regarding the nature of ties between Hamas and Islamic Jihad and whether there is coordination between them based on the premise that they have identical principles and objectives, the Hamas official said: We have constant contacts and coordination with our brothers in Jihad in Palestine on the bilateral level and on the level of the alliance of the 10 Palestinian groups.

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Algeria

Algeria's Merani: 'The FIS Never Had an Ideology'

BR0502150796 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish
5 Feb 96 p 4

[Interview with Algerian Religious Affairs Minister Ahmed Merani by "F.S." in Algiers; date not given: "The FIS Has No Ideology" — first two paragraphs are EL PAIS introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Algiers — Ahmed Merani, 47, founder and former leader of the fundamentalist party Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), has been Algeria's religious affairs minister for the past few months. His political trajectory has surprised no-one. It was not for nothing that Merani publicly left the fundamentalist organization about five years ago, after accusing FIS main leader Abasi Madani of having led the party into madness by seeking confrontation and trying to instigate a rebellion culminating in the June 1991 general strike.

After leaving FIS, Merani became an adviser to Prime Minister Ahmed Gozali for social, political, and religious affairs. Since then he has been rendering important services to the government, particularly as a public detractor of the FIS. Today, engrossed in the duties of his ministry, which controls the activities of some 11,000 mosques and 30,000 religious functionaries, Merani is still criticizing his old party, which he claims has no ideology and has been overtaken by events.

[EL PAIS] Are you involved in the initiatives promoted by a group of FIS dissidents aiming to re-found the party and calling on the armed groups to reach a truce?

[Merani] I have nothing to do with these initiatives you are telling me about. I have a clear-cut position. I am not familiar with the contents of the letter addressed to [Algerian] President Zeroual proposing a call for a truce. Neither do I know its contents nor have I been asked for an opinion or for my signature.

[EL PAIS] Did the FIS members understand your criticisms to the party and your reasons for leaving it?

[Merani] At that time, the FIS members did not understand my position. Now the situation is much clearer. I can tell you one thing: If the FIS had followed my advice then it would not today be disbanded, and what happened would not have happened. What sort of advice? Very simple: to give up insurrection and engage in politics instead. However, I can assure you that 95 percent of the FIS' former members have now recovered some hope. But, as a party, the FIS never had an ideology, and it has now been overcome by events.

[EL PAIS] Were the problems you had mainly problems with the party's "number one," Abasi Madani?

[Merani] Yes, basically my problems were only with Madani. I had no problems either with Abdelkader Hachani or with Ali Belhay. Only with Madani. He had chosen confrontation. He made a crisis break out and he dragged the party down with the crisis. What the FIS did in Algeria had previously been done by the Red Brigades in Italy or Luminous Path in Peru. It is not a political issue. With its uncompromising attitude, the FIS promoted a revolt, but apart from that the FIS lacks an ideology. There are four other Islamic parties in Algeria, including Hamas, Nahda, and the PRA, and there are no problems.

[EL PAIS] Can the stage when the FIS was the main party responsible for agitation in the mosques now be considered closed?

[Merani] It ended already some time ago. What went on before was anarchy. It was the state's duty to control the mosques. There were hundreds of them with no type of guidance. I have no statistics ready at hand, but I can tell you that the state now controls more than 99 percent of the places of worship, out of the 11,000 existing in Algeria, with some 30,000 functionaries involved in their management. The mosques which escape our control — not for political but for geographical reasons — constitute a very small minority.

[EL PAIS] Does this mean that you are moving toward a state religion which is more closely linked to a particular concept of the nation or government?

[Merani] We do not have a nationalist religion. Religion and nation are two different concepts. They have nothing to do with each other. Religion is universal. It is not bound to a particular idea of nation. For example, the contribution of Egyptian, Tunisian, and even Pakistani "ulemas" to our country has been very important. We cannot shut off the rest of the world. Just as there are Algerian ulemas and imams in Saudi Arabia, in Algeria [as published] or in Pakistan, there are ulemas from those countries here. Exchanges are natural in Islam.

[EL PAIS] For the past few months the mosques have been empty.

[Merani] Do you think so? I believe exactly the opposite. Mosques were shaken by the social problems. It is true that at a certain point in time the faithful preferred to worship in the intimacy of their homes. They felt safer. But after the presidential elections of 16 November last, things have started to change. People have returned to the mosques.

[EL PAIS] How did violence affect the mosques and the imams?

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[Merani] Violence has affected them as it has any other sector of Algerian society. Since the wave of assassinations began, 84 imams died in our country. But unlike other social sectors, the imams have decided to stay in Algeria. There have been no cases of exile or desertion. At least none I know of. Perhaps because deep down they believe in what they are doing.

[EL PAIS] Weeks ago the presidency's office asked the imams to disseminate a message of reconciliation and forgiveness. What exactly is being attempted?

[Merani] Many of the people that are now wanted by the police cannot be considered terrorists. Rather, they are misled people, who were swindled or lost their way. It is these people that the president of the Republic is trying to win back. The aim is to ensure a convincing message reaches them: "Despite your mistakes, you will be judged, but we will adopt a lenient attitude toward you."

[EL PAIS] Do you have any guarantees that this message has been conveyed to, and correctly transmitted from, the mosques?

[Merani] It has been disseminated by all available means, including the mosques, given that they constitute the deepest communication system within Algerian society. We have conveyed a number of general guidelines to the imams for them to disseminate this message of clemency, and the message has seeped down into society 100 percent. I can assure you.

FIS Spokesman Downplays Reports of Possible Madani Release

MM0502130696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 5 Feb 96 p 6

[Report by Sami Dhubyan in London: "Despite Algerian Government's Denial, the Islamic Salvation Front Does Not Rule Out Madani's Release"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Djafar Haouari, Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] spokesman in London, downplayed reports that FIS leader Shaykh Abassi Madani may be released by the Algerian authorities during the holy month of Ramadan.

It [the FIS] said that it feared that these reports could be just a maneuver. Meanwhile, authoritative Algerian sources were quick to deny that Madani could be released, and denied also that a new party led by one of the FIS' founders, Shaykh Othamane Aissani, has been authorized. The denial did not make it clear who the sources are or what authority they hold.

In response to these reports, Haouari — who is also a member of the FIS Executive Committee abroad — yesterday spoke to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, stressing the need for clarity, away from confusing and futile leaked reports.

Haouari said that the FIS calls for change and a way out of the current Algerian crisis, but not in installments or through initiatives from one side and incomplete positions from others. He indicated that the Algerian authorities banned the FIS leaders from visiting and consulting with Shaykh Abassi, and also banished the FIS deputy leader Imam Ali Belhadj to the desert, putting him in total isolation.

Haouari explained that, in view of the situation, the FIS stresses the following three points as the basis for change:

1. The release, even gradual, of all prisoners and detainees in Algerian jails.

2. Restoring the FIS to prominence and allowing it to continue its political activity and efforts, which are purely in the interest of Algeria, Islam, and Christians as a whole. [as published]

3. To remove the military establishment from politics, confine the decisionmaking process to the state and its institutions, and restore those institutions' prestige. Haouari added that it is important that Shaykh Abassi Madani is released, particularly in view of his failing health. His release, however, must be within the framework of a political solution, and there should be an agreed solution to ensure the success of such a move, since other FIS leaders previously released were asked not to undertake any activity or make any effort toward finding a solution to the crisis.

FIS official Haouari reiterated to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that, on the whole, FIS officials have no use for one-upmanship and are not extremists, saying: "We are making objective, reasonable proposals. If the other side is well intentioned, the FIS' proposals are an important step toward solving the Algerian crisis."

Haouari explained that what he mentioned about an FIS cease-fire cannot be taken separately from the FIS proposals as a whole. The Islamic Salvation Army remains committed to the FIS' proposals and leaders, and holds the same view, namely that Shaykh Madani's release alone is not enough, as there must be an integrated formula for a solution paving the way for the exercise of power and allowing the people to express their opinion through general elections.

The FIS London official Haouari revealed that the Algerian authorities did not allow two of the FIS leaders, Ali Djedi and Boukhamkham, to visit Shaykh Abassi in prison, hence, how could one believe that reports

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of his release are true, or that his release would serve a purpose. He said: "Moreover, Imam Ali Belhadj is banished in the desert. In view of this situation, how could these reports or others be positive or have positive repercussions on the situation in Algeria as a whole?" [passage omitted]

Algerian FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS0502130996 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 29 Jan 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by the Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe" — quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Editorial —

The Military regime objective of "re-domesticating" the Algerian people!

Praise be to Allah,

The Military regime in Algeria is stubbornly pursuing its march back in time to the pre-October 1988 era with the objective of "re-domesticating" the Algerian people. All its so-called political initiatives including the elections of Gen. Zeroual has been a military manoeuvre to silent for ever a part of the political "opposition that does oppose" and "eradicate" if possible the other part.

It clearly appears from this strategy that the regime has indeed never taken seriously the Algeria people "shout" for effective and concrete changes. What counts more in the eyes of the regime is those parties which have "crystallise" the Algerian people aspirations of today. For the regime those "manifestations" should be neutralised by any means and at any cost as long as it is made "cosmetically" acceptable to the international community particularly to Algeria's economical partners in the oil and gas industry. What the military regime seems to ignore is that the people's historical,sociological, political and economical conditions "give birth" to specific aspirations which are then "crystallised" by authentic political movements or parties. It is the historical situations that generate political movements and the opposite is rare and most often of a short life particularly if political actions are forced upon the situation in a direction opposite to the people's trend of natural aspirations.

In the regime's "philosophy book", it is said that if the "neutralisation" by any means of the "opposition which does oppose" is possible then the legitimate demands and exigences of the Algerian people will disappear for ever and Algeria will go back fully to its "post-independence" and "pre-October 88" masters which are the same commonly known as the "Nomenklatura"! It is indeed, this shortsighted way of thinking, which can not at this moment see any further than the announced legislative and local elections, that is making Algeria an unpredictable "volcano" which if it were to erupt will wipe out the regime and the "political DIY (do it yourself)" (political bricolage) which was presented to the Algerian people as the only alternative to compensate for their immense sacrifices.

In reality, the problem of the military dictatorship is not with the political parties, it is with the Algerian people. The political parties are only intermediaries. Some with authentic mandates and legitimacy and some with fake ones accured during darkness. Signs are pointing to the fact that economical and social situations are getting worst on the top of the political fiasco resulting from the obsessive urge of the military Generals to stay in power. These problems will surely result in some kind of popular reactions which will not be appeased by empty political slogans such as that of Mr Ouyahya, the regime prime minister who has been metamorphosed lately to Gen. Zeroual's campaign manager attracting for him the votes of those against corruption, the unemployed etc. The Algerian people like frankness and would have perhaps appreciated if Mr Ouyahyia has just told them what they all already know: that he did not have half of the "sky's stars on his shoulders" as many "barons of corruption" have theirs decorated with and as such he is only able to bring to the public just small "fishes from the corruption ocean". But what the Algerian people do not really appreciate is when Mr Ouyahyia tries to magnify these "microscopic fishes" in order to mislead them into believing that an effective rupture with the methods of the past has effectively begun. Mr Ouyahyia has better to go back to the job the Algeria people know him by i.e. that of the regime prime minister and leave the Gen. Zeroual electoral campaign for others.

The political will to end the crisis or to effectively fight corruption and recover some of the Algeria's money that would probably pay for a lot of the Algeria foreign debt, is non-existent for the simple reason that bringing Gen. Zeroual and putting him in that position is a part of a process to preserve the status quo and the interests of those who have been benefiting from the situation for a long time and are immune from the "tickles" of people like Mr Ouyahyia. And finally, here is a question the Algerian people have not found a proper answer: "Why is it that recently a delegation from the World bank conducted by Mr Claude Archambault has come to Algeria to check on the use of 130 million of U.S. dollars which it has advanced for a road project? Doesn't the World Bank trust the integrity of the Algerian authorities? And why nobody seemed to care this time about "ingerence in internal affairs of the country"?

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News of Jihad and Mujahedeen

"To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged, and verily, Allah is Most powerful for their aid" (Koran, Surat Al Hajj,22:39) "we don't like to beat around the bush", we prefer clarity and frankness even if it means to be hanged for what we believe to be a duty and a right. The struggle against the regime of the military junta has become a legitimate and lawful duty as demonstrated previously, in order to "grab" the right of the people to freely choose. " ((Shaykh Abu Abdelfatah Ali Belhadj in "Fasl el kalam fi mouajahate dolm el hokam" ("The conclusive criterion in confronting injustice from the rulers "). page 303. Book written from cell No 09 in the Blida Military jail. 1992))

Tlemcen: A unite of Mujahedeen from the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) has attacked a Junta paramilitary gendarme barracks. The outcome was the neutralisation of seventeen Junta gendarmes and the destruction of two helicopters and two troops transporter trucks. The military regime has retaliated by launching some operations in the mountains of Tlemcen after having received support from its unites in El Bayad and El Aricha.

Oued Rhio: A convoy of armed militia was attacked by a unite of the AIS Mujahedeen. One armed militia was neutralised and another wounded. In the same locality, the Mujahedeen have attacked an armed militia barracks. Five of these mercenaries have been neutralised. The Mujahedeen of the AIS have also collected four weapons from a group of armed militia during a day time operation in which four mercenaries were neutralised.

Bouira: The Mujahedeen have set up an ambush to a Junta paratrooper gendarme convoy. Four of the Junta gendarmes were neutralised and many were wounded. An important quantity of weapon and ammunition was collected.

Bab El Oued: In three different operations, a Junta captain in the secret police, an officer in the "special forces" and another Junta officer from the secret police working in the torture centre of Cavignac. A Berretta, fifteen bullets and important document were collected.

Belcourt: A Junta secret police middle rank officer was neutralised and his weapon collected. In another operation a Junta police inspector was neutralised.

Tigzirt: The Mujahedeen have set up an ambush to a Junta Gendarme patrol on Tizi Ouzou road. Four Junta paratrooper gendarmes were neutralised and their weapons collected.

Ouled Yaich: The Mujahedeen have set up an ambush to a Junta "red beret" patrol in the locality of Ben Achour. Five Junta soldiers were neutralised and many others wounded, three Klashes were collected.

Blida: A Junta soldiers convoy was attacked on the road going to Bougherfa. Four Junta soldiers were neutralised and one wounded.

Egypt

Egyptian Foreign Minister Views Middle East Peace Process

AU0502175296 Frankfurt/Main FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE in German 5 Feb 96 p 6

[Report on interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Mahmud Musa by "hfe."; place and date not given: "New Open Community of Arab States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Davos, 4 February — "In order to advance the Middle East peace process, it is necessary that the Arabs move. In these days, I have heard this sentence often, far too often, because it is wrong. It takes two to tango," Egyptian Foreign Minister Musa said in an interview with this newspaper. For example, he hears again and again from Americans and Europeans that Syrian President al-Asad has to approach Israel. But who says the same to Prime Minister Peres? Who calls on him to see reason regarding the Golan Heights or to openly discuss the problem of Jerusalem with the Arabs? Musa was altogether optimistic that the peace process will not stagnate, but he made it clear that the wrong language toward Damascus is little helpful.

As a result of the Middle East peace process, not only the situation of the Palestinians has changed there. The region, and perhaps the whole of the Arab world, will get a new face. While the hostilities with Israel have determined the development so far, other items of the agenda will now have to be named. They particularly include the social and economic tasks that have to be mastered, he said.

In addition, after the disappearance of the joint enemy, Israel, the Arab world will have to look for a new order. After the end of the combat community, the point has to be to achieve a real community of states now, perhaps according to the example of the EU. Only if cooperation clearly improves will permanent peace in the Middle East be possible. There will certainly be difficulties, Musa said and mentioned the conflict between Jordan and Iraq. "Nevertheless, in the end, we will be successful in forming an open community of Arab states," the foreign minister said.

Musa called on the Europeans to continue to work on the ideas of the Mediterranean community. They should

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visualize that it helps to treat the Arab countries like real partners. That means cultivating things that one has in common and understanding the situation of the other, which unfortunately is not always done, as the European perception of fundamentalism proves. There, the Europeans like to hide behind slogans like human rights, which are, of course, also recognized in Egypt, but are threatened by fundamentalist violence in his country. Therefore, Cairo is forced to take appropriately drastic measures, he said.

Egyptian Commentary Welcomes Christopher's Middle East Tour

NC0402184996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Commentary by Muhammad al-Sa'id Fa'iq: "Christopher's New Tour: Another Step Toward Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tomorrow U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will begin a new shuttle mission between Syria and Israel for talks with senior officials of the two countries. The new tour comes at a time when developments in the Middle East peace process, as well as regional events, are the focus of attention in all capitals concerned with the peace process.

The fourth round of the Maryland talks, which concluded on Wednesday [31 January], ended without providing any more hope to alleviate the anxious atmosphere in the region. On the contrary, remarks by some Israeli officials have cast doubt on whether any progress was made at the Maryland talks. These talks are stalled because of the substantial gap between the Syrian position, which envisages the need to start the withdrawal from the Golan, and the Israeli position, which insists that peace must await the implementation of security arrangements and the normalization of bilateral relations.

Moreover, Christopher's tour comes at a time when the Palestinian people are beginning to see the fruits of the peace process in the Palestinian Authority's [PA] areas, the results of the legislative council elections, and the formation of the PA's government. These are fundamental steps in the right direction toward the Palestinian dream of establishing a Palestinian state and recovering their land, rights, and identity. In general terms, these steps mean that Israel is bowing to the international will and accepts in practice the principle of land for peace.

All these things make Christopher's coming trip to the region extremely important, particularly since the United States is clearly reiterating its interest in backing the peace efforts in the region. At his joint news conference with French President Chirac in Washington the day before yesterday, President Clinton expressed optimism that Syria and Israel will soon reach a peace agreement. He noted that this optimism is primarily due to the determination to succeed by both sides, even though complicated issues still need to be discussed and resolved.

Being determined to successfully conclude a peace agreement that will end the long decades of war and hatred between the Arabs and Israel is indeed half the battle. If Arab negotiators holds on tight to his rights and believes that a real peace based on justice and right is the only peace that will last and be able to withstand the campaigns of suspicion and rejection, then the prolonged talks will not undermine this peace but will put it into proper focus. The extensive efforts by the United States, as the main sponsor of the peace process, could help a lot in ironing out some of the differences over how to make peace and build bridges of confidence between the two sides through the appropriate measures, in which the United States could participate. This is particularly true in the sphere of security arrangements, to which Israel attaches great importance and on which much controversy centers.

While welcoming Christopher as he begins his trip to the region tomorrow, Cairo hopes that this trip will help bolster the peace efforts, narrow the differences in views, and settle the remaining differences between Syria and Israel, so that 1996 can become the year of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Egyptian Commentary Expects Christopher's Tour To Yield Progress

NC0502184696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Commentary by Mahmud Marzuq: "Christopher and the Crucial Tour"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Everyone is aware of the importance of the Middle East tour U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is beginning today. He will brief Damascus and Tel Aviv on the United States' assessment of the Syrian-Israeli talks, both in terms of their substance and procedures. Christopher is expected to bring new proposals to Syrian and Israeli leaders to obtain solutions not reached in Maryland.

The tour seems crucial for moving the peace process toward the desired goal—a fair and comprehensive peace for the region's security and stability.

Without indulging in too much optimism, the positive atmosphere that paved the way for the resumption of Syrian-Israeli talks with U.S. participation undoubtedly will help to make a genuine advancement. It will also

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create an effective impetus, provided that positive statements are backed by actual deeds. This is especially true because some essential issues are extremely contentious. Israel has proposed a series of conditions which Syria considers as obstructionist and unacceptable because they contradict the bases of the peace process, Security Council resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle.

What is urgently required is that Christopher's tour define a clear Israeli stand committed to the principle of a complete withdrawal from occupied southern Lebanon and the Golan. This will facilitate a detailed, clear, and definitive timetable for a complete Israeli withdrawal and this alone will prove Israel's sincere intentions toward a fair and comprehensive peace.

The time for exploratory talks and the U.S. secretary's tours of the region for this purpose is over. The situation during this current tour requires explicit decisions and decisive stands on crucial issues, the foremost of which is a complete Israeli withdrawal. This withdrawal is the real key to peace, with all its manifest requirements—the principles of right, justice, equality, and parity.

Here emerge the mutual security commitments. Previously, there was an understanding along the broad lines of these commitments. When this understanding was announced, it was regarded as an advanced step. However, Israel circumvented this by raising the issue of early warning ground stations to create an impediment to progress made in previous talks.

Therefore, during the U.S. secretary's tour, observers are counting on a new potential U.S. role to reach a logical and fair agreement on the Syrian-Israeli track of the peace process.

If the implementation of UN resolutions requiring Israel to pull out completely from the Golan achieves a resounding victory for Tel Aviv in the upcoming elections, the same applies to the next U.S. presidential elections.

The upcoming presidential elections are believed to play a role in the Syrian-Israeli differences. However, the optimism about settling these differences through the solutions brought by U.S. Secretary Christopher is contingent upon practical, positive stands. This may enhance the optimism and help provide the requirements for progress with the speed desired by the U.S. The U.S. sponsor has increased his positive intervention in the negotiations since the latest Maryland round.

The internationally awaited progress will depend on Israel's readiness to commit to a complete withdrawal in return for a comprehensive peace. It will also depend on Israel's agreement on the principles of equality and parity in mutual security arrangements. Thus the progress sought from the U.S. secretary's tour will remain contingent upon understanding its objective elements. The Syrian-Israeli track will experience a new and rapid advancement toward the desired goal, and the progress on the Syrian track will lead to progress on the Lebanese track.

Egypt's Musa Calls For International Cooperation Against Terrorism

BR0502141596 Paris LE MONDE in French 5 Feb 96 p 3

[Report on interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Alexandre Buccianti in Cairo on 31 January: "Egypt Calls For International Cooperation Against Terrorism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa is a fervent supporter of international cooperation to combat terrorism. The assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak on 26 June 1995 in Addis Ababa and the bomb that ripped through the Egyptian Embassy in Pakistan on 19 November merely served to strengthen his resolve. Mr. Musa said to LE MONDE on Wednesday 31 January: "This kind of situation means it is essential for there to be cooperation between states since the terrorist phenomenon is not just limited to one region or one religion."

Cairo has therefore decided to have "dialogue" with London on the subject of Egyptian Muslim extremists who have obtained political refugee status in Britain. Similar steps have been taken with other countries. Mr. Musa explained: "The government must act to stop the orders that are coming from abroad, encouraging terrorist attacks against the Egyptian people."

He said that the extremist movements in the Gulf countries were not being funded by the governments.

Misapprehension

If we are to believe Mr. Musa, the paymasters are "certain organizations and associations or private individuals who are laboring under the misapprehension that their money is being spent on building mosques and charity work." This is why Cairo is trying to convince the donors of "the need to check up" before showing their generosity. He stressed: "Today everyone knows that there is a problem caused by the abuse of religion and the diverting of funds donated in its name. We are not banning these donations, but any money found to be subsidizing terrorism will be seized by the government."

Now that the peace process is underway in the Middle East, Mr. Musa insisted on the "preeminence of the

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economy." In this respect he said that work was afoot to restructure the embassies to make them more active in investment, trade, and tourism. It is this new priority given to the economy that pushed Egypt into "participating in the recent Davos Forum and organizing the third regional conference on development in Cairo in November." However, in the minister's view "the peace dividends must be appreciated at grass roots level so that regional cooperation can progress in parallel."

Egyptian Muslim 'Militants' Face Death Sentence

NC0502160596 Paris AFP in English
1440 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 5 (AFP)—Prosecutors called Monday [5 February] for the death sentence against nine Muslim militants and life in jail with hard labor for 20 others accused of waging attacks on police in south Egypt, legal sources said.

Egypt's high security court set a March 2 date to begin the trial of the 29 members of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah group, who are accused of killing three policemen and injuring six others in attacks in 1993.

Khalid al-Qawsi, one of the nine facing execution, was the alleged leader of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah cell which conducted eight attacks on police in Aswan and Kawm Umbu, 920 kilometers (550 miles) south of Cairo, prosecutors said. They said the cell also "planned bomb attacks on vital institutions and important figures in an attempt to overthrow the government." The defendants were arrested in late 1993, but five are still at large.

The al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah is the leading armed group waging a campaign to topple the government of President Husni Mubarak that has left more than 940 dead since March 1992. Seven months after the wave of violence erupted, Mubarak ordered that most cases involving militants should be tried in military or security courts to ensure rapid sentences. In the past two years, 73 people have been condemned to death and 48 sentences carried out.

Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Seeks Members' Release From Prison

NC0302163096 Paris AFP in English
1534 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 3 (AFP)—The outlawed Muslim Brotherhood [MB] took legal action on Saturday [3 February] to free from prison 54 of its members sentenced last year by a military court, legal sources said.

Brotherhood lawyers asked a Cairo administrative court to cancel the sentences against the 54, who were given prison terms of up to five years hard labor. They also asked for the group's Cairo offices, shut down by police after the sentencing, to be allowed to reopen.

"The accused committed no crime and we ask that the presidential decree confirming the sentences be canceled," the lawyers said in their case. The administrative court has not set a date for the case, the sources said.

In two separate military trials of 81 members of the fundamentalist group, the 54 were found guilty in November of "directing an illegal organisation aiming to impede the rule of law and Constitution." Rulings by military courts cannot be appealed, so technically the Brotherhood case was filed in a civil court against the confirmation of the sentences by President Husni Mubarak, the sources said.

The group has also appealed to the Constitutional Court against the presidential decision which originally put the Brotherhood members before a military rather than civilian court. But the Constitutional Court has yet to set a date for hearing the case.

Banned since 1954, the Brotherhood has faced a police crackdown amid a wave of militant violence which has left more than 940 people dead and dozens of its members have been arrested since January last year.

Egyptian Economy Minister, German Ambassador Discuss Ties, Aid

NC0502171396 Cairo MENA in English
1450 GMT 5 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 5 Feb (MENA)—Minister of Economy and International Cooperation Dr. Nawal al-Tatawi today conferred with the German ambassador to Egypt on issues related to economic relations between the two countries. They reviewed the implemented projects according to the financial protocol concluded by Cairo and Bonn in 1995 as well as the features of the coming financial protocol between the two countries.

Both sides exchanged views regarding the German assistance to be offered to Egypt in the field of privatization and economic reforms, an officials source in the Foreign Ministry said. Germany has offered Egypt aid worth 7.4 billion deutsch marks, including 5.95 billion mark-soft loans. Germany is considered Egypt's second main partner after the United States.

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IMF, World Bank Officials Arrive in Egypt

NC0402094796 Cairo MENA in English 0751 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 4 (MENA)—The IMF Executive Director for the Middle East Dr. 'Abd-al-Shakur Sha'lan arrived here this morning together with the World Bank adviser Dr. Muhammad al-'Aryan from Jordan for a two-day visit to Egypt. In a statement upon arrival, Dr. Sha'lan said that he will confer with Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri and the ministers of finance and economy on the economic reform stages, Egypt's debts as well as development and investment fields. An IMF delegation is due here in the last week of this month for talks with senior officials here on the latest developments of the economic reform programme and Egypt's needs.

Egyptian Foreign Ministry Statement Laments Kashmir Incidents

NC0202153196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Egypt has expressed deep regret over the latest incidents in Kashmir, in which innocent people's lives were jeopardized and Islamic holy places faced the danger of destruction.

A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry today said Egypt uses its strong ties and friendship with India and Pakistan to urge both countries to exercise self-restraint and settle the dispute peacefully, proceeding from the good-neighborly relations that should prevail among friendly nations.

Egyptian Radio Commentary Views UN Resolution Against Sudan

NC0202144796 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "The Security Council's Resolution Warns Sudan Against Continuing Its Terrorist Policies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Security Council yesterday morning ratified a resolution proposed by the Non-aligned Movement. Egypt participated in drafting the resolution. It asks the Sudanese Government to immediately hand over to Ethiopia three terrorists accused of participating in plotting to attack President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June.

The resolution asked the Sudanese Government to stop backing and facilitating terrorist activities and sheltering terrorists. It also demanded that Sudan behave with its neighbors within the general framework of commitment to the UN and OAU charters.

The Security Council emphasized its full condemnation of the terrorist attempt against President Mubarak. The resolution also condemned the flagrant violation of Ethiopia's territorial integrity and the security of Ethiopia and the entire region.

The Security Council resolution condemns the Sudanese regime's embroilment in terrorist acts. The al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime's attempts to absolve itself from these terrorist policies are futile. The Security Council's resolution came six months after the attempted attack on President Mubarak, after Ethiopia's efforts failed to convince Sudan to hand over those involved in that evil attempt despite available evidence that the perpetrators fled to Sudan.

What should be noted here is that the issue does not end with the Security Council resolution, because the resolution asked the UN secretary general to cooperate with the OAU to implement the resolution and notify the Security Council of the outcome of efforts made in this regard.

The Security Council resolution contains an explicit (warning) to Sudan against continuing its efforts to help, support, and facilitate terrorist activities, providing shelter for terrorists, and continuing its policy of brutalization and provocation.

In this respect, we ought to mention the Sudanese foreign minister's statements shortly before the resolution was passed. He made an utterly incredible statement. He described the resolution as an international conspiracy aiming to impose sanctions against Sudan. He accused Egypt of seeking to pass this resolution without giving Sudan an opportunity to defend itself.

We made a reference to this statement to show the Sudanese regime's attempts to distort facts and the Sudanese officials' naive statements. What the Sudanese rulers must understand is that each day brings more and more evidence about their involvement in terrorist acts. They also must understand that the international community will not turn a blind eye to these acts that violate the entire region's security. Thus came the Security Council members' assertion of the need to confront these terrorist acts and activities.

With all these developments taking place in the international arena against terrorism and those who are behind it, Khartoum's rulers are still uttering lies and distorting facts believing that this might succeed in concealing their crimes. However, the situation is now very serious and Khartoum's rulers are no longer able to cover it up.

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Libya

Libyan Daily Ponders U.S. Fears Over Farrakhan Visit

LD0502180196 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1615 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 5 Feb (JANA) — The Tripoli-based daily AL-ZAHF AL-AKHDAR has wondered why the United States, a rich superpower with a vast arsenal of conventional and unconventional weapons, should be alarmed by Louis Farrakhan's visit to the Great Jamahiriyah.

The daily pointed out in an article published today, that no-one in the whole world would believe U.S. claims on such a visit.

The daily reiterated, however, that the reason for U.S. alarm is the fact that Libya has decided to support the just cause of Muslims and blacks in America, a cause which has always been a thorn in the side of the United States.

The daily added that the United States does not want to go public and admit that what is really worrying about such a visit is the seriousness of the injustices in U.S. society, which is still basically racist despite the slogans to the contrary with which the United States has been trying to deceive the world.

The paper also reiterated that what really frightened the United States was the fact that blacks have found someone who will stand by their side and tell them the truth and that [U.S.] Muslims have also found a powerful voice which inspires them to claim their rights and freedom in their own country.

Sudan

UNHCR Spokesman Concerned for Sudanese Refugees in Ethiopia

NC0502142096 Cairo MENA in English 1345 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Addis Ababa, Feb 5—(MENA)—The spokesman for the UNHCR's [United Nations High Commission for Refugees] regional office here expressed mounting worries over the increasing number of Sudanese flocking to Sudan's borders with Ethiopia to flee the fighting raging in southern Sudan.

The spokesman told MENA today that new waves of Sudanese arrive to the border with Ethiopia and are waiting for permission to cross into the Ethiopian territories where camps are set up for Sudanese refugees in Gambela and Mezane [name as received].

The UNHCR office has taken the necessary measures in anticipation of the flow of 25,000 Sudanese into Ethiopia over the coming few months, he said. The number of Sudanese refugees living in the Western areas in Ethiopia exceeds 60,000 people, the spokesman added.

Sudanese Opposition Group Spokesman Welcomes UN Resolution

NC0202174496 Cairo MENA in English 1527 GMT 2 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 2 Feb (MENA)—The Sudanese opposition welcomed the Security Council resolution which gave the Khartoum regime sixty days to hand over the terrorists involved in the attempt on the life of President Husni Mubarak, former foreign minister and spokesman of the Sudanese Democratic National Grouping Faruq Abu-'Isa said today.

The resolution condemned the regime led by National Islamic Front which was termed as terrorist and extremist, Abu-'Isa added.

The Sudanese opposition considers the UN resolution as a positive step adopted by the international community to confront terrorism, he said.

The front-led regime thought that it was able to evade responsibility of terrorist acts which were exported to neighbors and the entire international community, Abu-'Isa further said.

The Sudanese opposition has reiterated that ousting Khartoum regime was not the responsibility of the Sudanese people alone but the neighboring countries and the international community as well, he added.

The Security Council resolution opened the door before the opposition and the Sudanese people to unify ranks to oust the regime and uproot it, he said.

Abu-'Isa pointed to the sufferings of the Sudanese people due to the scarcity of food and medicine and deterioration of education and security.

Sudanese National Congress Rejects UN Security Council Resolution

EA0602081896 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a news conference held this afternoon at the Friendship Hall in Khartoum, Dr. Ghazi Salah al-Din, secretary general of the National Congress, stressed that the Secretariat of the National Congress totally rejects the recent UN Security Council resolution regarding Sudan. He urged others to oppose it by all means until it is suspended or amended.

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His excellency added that the Secretariat earlier today reviewed the resolution and resolved to mobilize internally and externally in order to explain the ramifications of this resolution against the Sudanese people, which is an attempt at (word indistinct).

Sudanese Unions Condemn UN Security Council's 'Hostile Stance'

EA0602082996 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Sudanese Federation of Professional Unions issued a statement today, rejecting and condemning the selective policies of the UN Security Council [UNSC] and the forces of international arrogance. It condemns the hostile stance adopted against the free peoples.

The statement stresses that the unions will strive to defend freedom and honor.

The unions condemn the UNSC's recent resolution against Sudan, terming it an attempt to besmirch Sudan's image and dent its credibility.

The statement stresses that the UNSC did not adopt any resolution regarding Ugandan aggression in southern Sudan and Ethiopian aggression on our eastern borders. This fact, it says, confirms the the UNSC's selective criteria. [passage omitted]

Sudan's Foreign Minister on Efforts To Track Egyptian Terrorists

MS0602100796 London INDEPENDENT in English 6 Feb 96 p 13

[Report on interview with Ali Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Utman Muhammad Taha by David Orr in Khartoum on 5 February]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sudan is to intensify its search for three suspects wanted in connection with the attempted assassination of the Egyptian President, Husni Mubarak, last year. If found on Sudanese territory, they will be arrested and extradited, Ali 'Utman Muhammad Taha, the country's Foreign Minister, said yesterday.

His assurances come in the wake of a UN Security Council resolution demanding that Sudan hand over three Egyptians suspected of trying to kill President Mubarak in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, last June.

Sudan's Islamic regime has for a long time been accused by the West, particularly the United States, of training and harbouring terrorists. Since the attack on President Mubarak Sudan's relations with. Egypt and Ethiopia have deteriorated dramatically.

"We are putting more effort into demonstrating our seriousness in conducting this search," the influential minister told the INDEPENDENT yesterday. "We are taking some measures which will be made public in a day or two. What else can we do? We have been given an impossible mission".

The Khartoum government of Lieutenant-General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, which has consistently denied any involvement in the assassination attempt, has been given 60 days by the UN to hand over the three suspects. It admits that one of the three Egyptians named by Ethiopia did enter Sudan after the attack but insists that he did not stay.

"We believe the resolution has been based on unfounded presumptions," said Mr Taha. "We feel we have been unjustly treated on this issue. Sudan is an open country. We have never provided military training for any elements whether they are Egyptians or other nationalities."

Mr Taha said his government would shortly begin a campaign to explain its position. The UN resolution is being seen here as part of an international conspiracy to isolate Sudan and as a prelude to demands for trade sanctions by the US.

The Security Council resolution condemning Sudan was immediately followed by an announcement by the US that it was withdrawing all American personnel from its embassy in Khartoum. Some 30 embassy employees are due to leave the Sudanese capital by the end of this week though the US insists it is not breaking diplomatic relations. A US embassy spokesman yesterday dismissed as "totally coincidental" the fact that the announcement of the withdrawal came at the same time as the resolution.

"We're suspending our presence out of concern for the safety of our personnel," said the diplomat. "There's been no one development which has prompted our decision. We've had a longstanding concern over Sudan harbouring terrorist groups. It's dangerous for us here and it will continue to be dangerous for as long as the Sudanese Government fails to curb the activities of terrorist groups based here."

The US says the threats to its staff come from both Sudanese and "non-Sudanese elements" a catch-all phrase denoting Palestinian and other groups. The US, which has had Sudan on its list of state sponsors of terrorism since 1993, reports the existence in the country of up to 20 terrorist training camps. The camps are said to be moved frequently to outwit spy satellites.

"For some international powers — particularly for the US and Britain — the Islamic attitudes of Sudan pose

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a threat to their interests," said Mr Taha. "But our interpretation of Islam does not lead to confrontation with the West, it does not lead to violence or terrorism."

Mr Taha admitted that there are many Palestinian and other Arabs based in Sudan but denied they are engaged in military activities. They were leading "normal civilian lives".

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Bahrain

Bahrain's Prime Minister Says Stability, Security Prevail

JN0502183796 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1420 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 5 Feb (WAKH)—Bahraini Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman al Khalifah has stated that security and stability prevail in Bahrain, adding that the misled handful which carried out riots and sabotage operations failed to harm the people's achievements or to terrorize them.

His Highness Shaykh Khalifah said this when he received here today Wolkhardt Windewurt (name as transliterated), an official from the German DER SPIEGEL magazine in the presence of Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', minister of cabinet affairs and information. His highness emphasized that the door is open to them if they want to return to the sound path and work with those who work to serve their country.

The prime minister said that one of the government's priority tasks is the entrenchment of security and stability to provide a propitious atmosphere for Gulf and foreign investments, to encourage new industries, and to create job opportunities.

The prime minister said that terrorism has become a world phenomenon and should be combated within the framework of a joint international effort. Terrorism in one place does not mean it should exist in another place.

His highness said that combating terrorism is like giving a push to the peace process. In the same manner that peace should be comprehensive, combating terrorism should also be comprehensive and on all levels and in all directions if real peace is to exist in this world.

Opposition Leaders Urge Recall of Bahrain Parliament

NC0502182896 Paris AFP in English
1708 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Feb 5 (AFP) - Sunni and Shiite opposition leaders in Bahrain urged the authorities on Monday to restore parliament to end 14 months of political unrest blamed by the government on Shiite Moslems backed by Iran.

"The authorities want it thought that there is collusion between detained (Shiite) opposition leaders and foreign powers in order to hide the existence of a national opposition in Bahrain from world opinion," they said.

In a statement sent to AFP by a committee comprising three Sunni leaders and three Shiites, they urged Bahrain's Sunni-led authorities to "stop the cycle of terrorism" and called for the release of political detainees.

The committee members, who also called for dialogue, all signed a 1994 petition calling for the restitution of parliament, which was suspended in 1975. Opposition groups have said 25,000 people signed the petition.

The three Sunni members of the committee are 'Abd-al-Latif, al- Mahmud, Ahmad Shamlan and Sheikh Isa al-Judar, while the three Shiites are Sa'id al-Asbuli, Abdel-al-Wahhab Husayn and Sheikh Abd- al-Amir al-Jamri. The last two were arrested in January.

The authorities, who last week expelled an Iranian diplomat, on Monday banned the holding of a democracy meeting in Manama on Tuesday at which Shamlan and al-Mahmud were due to speak, opposition leaders told AFP by telephone.

Unrest first erupted in December 1994 when the Sunni-led authorities arrested a Shiite Moslem cleric who called for the restoration of parliament.

Lawyers in Bahrain said at least 2,000 people have been imprisoned in the last four weeks amid troubles that followed a government ban on political gatherings at Shiite Moslem mosques.

Bahraini authorities reported several arson attacks at the weekend, but there were fewer than in the previous weeks.

The government has announced several plans to create more jobs, launch training programs and hire more Bahrainis in a bid to ease the unemployment which has contributed to the unrest.

Around 60 percent of the population is Shiite.

Bahrain: CPP Claims 'Foreign Pressure' Prevented Return To Democracy

LD0602122296 Tehran IRNA in English
1215 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Feb. 6, IRNA — The Committee for Popular Petition in Bahrain (CPP) says that it has evidence of severe foreign pressure being brought to bear on the country's government that has resulted in preventing calls being raised for the return of democracy. Several outsiders, it said, had meddled and complicated the crisis by holding the patronizing view that it is "too much for Bahrainis" to have an elected parliament and to enjoy political freedom based on civil society concepts and bound by constitutional legitimacy.

The CPP comprises all tendencies in Bahraini society, including Shia and Sunni Muslims and patriotic activists, and has been petitioning for the restoration of

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the country's constitution and parliament since it was formed in October 1994.

In a released statement via its London office, it condemned distorted reports falsifying charges against religious scholars and others detained by the security forces. It also denounced claims that there was any foreign link with their home-grown campaign.

The outside meddling, the CPP suggested, included distortions in the international media, especially the Arab press, which was falsifying the legitimate and peaceful demands of the people and making untrue claims of religious leaders instigating violence. The aim, its statement said, was to "divert the attention of the world public opinion from the reality of the political crisis."

The reality instead was that there existed in Bahrain a "broadly based national opposition and all these maneuvers are aimed at obstructing the path for achieving its legitimate demands," it explained.

The CPP went on to urge all honest people of the world to convince the political leadership in Bahrain to initiate dialogue, to release political prisoners and to save the country from possible disaster.

Bahrain Authorities Step Up Security at Electrical Installations

NC0602092096 Paris AFP in English 0851 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Feb 6 (AFP) — Bahraini authorities have stepped up security around electrical installations after 88 of them were attacked in a wave of political unrest, the Gulf Daily News reported on Tuesday [6 February].

Rioters this year have destroyed eight sub-stations each costing 10,000 dinars (37,000 dollars) and each serving up to 200 people, the English-language daily said. Eighty other installations were also damaged.

Electricity and Water Minister 'Abdallah Jum'ah told the paper that rioters also set fire to street-lighting units, damaged poles, overhead lines and electric conductors. It took three days to repair major damage and minor damage was fixed the same day, he said.

"We are protecting sub-stations in some areas by erecting concrete blocks and steel doors," the minister said. There are a total of 2,000 sub-stations in Bahrain.

The worst political violence since Bahrain became independent in 1971 broke out after the arrest on December 5, 1994 of a Shiite cleric who demanded the restoration of parliament which was suspended in 1975. At least 13 people were killed in clashes between mainly Shiite protesters and the Sunni-led authorities from December 1994 to April 1995. A new wave of unrest broke out in January after gatherings at Shiite mosques were banned.

Kuwait

Kuwait 'Welcomes' Iraqi Oil-Sales Agreement With UN

JN0202192596 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 24 Jan 96 pp 1, 6

[Special to THE ARAB TIMES; by Salim al-Wawan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, Jan 23 — Kuwait on Tuesday welcomed what looks to be an Iraqi acceptance of limited oil sales for humanitarian needs.

Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad told the ARAB TIMES that Kuwait welcomes the Iraqi implementation of any UN Security Council resolutions including Resolution 986 which stipulates limited oil sales by Iraq to finance humanitarian needs for Iraqis.

"There are UN resolutions that Iraq needs to implement without delay. The Iraqi regime is responsible for the sufferings of the Iraqi people and if Baghdad agrees to implement the resolution it should be considered a positive development," Shaykh Sabah said.

He added that Kuwait is closely monitoring the situation, referring in this connection to a committee formed by the UN. Secretary General to supervise the implementation of the resolution.

Shaykh Sabah regretted some news reports were holding Kuwait responsible for Iraq's failure to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions. "These resolutions, which the Iraqi regime has been trying not to comply with are an international will and Iraq must implement them as the only means for peace and stability in the region," he stressed.

In a related development, Finance Minister Nasir al-Rawdan told reporters on Tuesday that Iraqi oil sales will not directly affect Kuwait's oil revenues projected in the current fiscal year budget. He said that Kuwait has based the calculations of oil revenues on the assumption that oil prices will be between $12 or 13 a barrel.

"I don't think that oil prices will go lower than this level even if Iraq resumes oil sales," al-Rawdan affirmed and admitting at the same time that oil prices are like to go down if Iraqi resumed oil sales.

Meanwhile, sources of the Iraqi opposition close to the United States revealed that the U.S. has recently sent

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threats to Iraq to pressure its leadership to accept the Resolution 986. The sources said that the U.S. message to Iraq was sent through France.

The U.S. threatened to initiate a new UN resolution branding all Iraqi leadership as war criminals and directly responsible for the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

Kuwaiti Defense Minister Receives Message From UK Counterpart

LD0502154296 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1404 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 5 Feb — Kuwaiti Defense Minister Shaykh Ahmad Hamud al-Jabir al-Sabah received a written message today from his British counterpart Michael Portillo.

The directorate of moral guidance and public relations in the Kuwaiti army said that the British minister's message dealt with bilateral relations between the two countries. It was delivered by Bentley, director of military hardware marketing in the British Ministry of Defense, during his meeting with the Kuwaiti minister. The meeting also was attended by British Ambassador to Kuwait William Fullerton.

It is to be recalled that British Defense Secretary Michael Portillo visited Kuwait in the middle of January and held talks with his Kuwaiti counterpart. Afterward Portillo said that his country hopes to sell Kuwait a number of Sea Skua missiles to equip eight patrol boats which the latter purchased from France last March.

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Saddam Husayn Said Set To Ask Oppositionists To Return

MM0502165396 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 3-4 Feb 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Saddam Sends Envoys To Persuade Oppositionists To Return and To Participate in a Coalition Government"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — The Iraqi leadership has begun to feel self-confident five years after the second Gulf war. Those arriving in the Jordanian capital from Baghdad say that the al-Rashid Hotel is these days crowded with Arab and foreign businessmen seeking trade deals of all kinds in the light of the increasing hopes of an imminent partial lifting of the embargo imposed on Iraqi oil exports in implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 986, which allows Iraq to sell $1 billion worth of oil over six months.

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI has learned that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn is in the process of sending envoys to a number of Arab and foreign capitals to meet with Iraqi oppositionist technocrats, especially those who have remained independent and not worked for any hostile quarters. Iraqi sources close to the Iraqi leadership say that the envoys will invite these oppositionists to return to Baghdad to participate in a coalition government and assume high posts in the government.

The sources added that this move was made after extensive contacts with some of these figures over the past three months. These contacts resulted in an agreement to replace the traditional, convulsive Iraqi media rhetoric with rational rhetoric to encourage dialogue, exchange of views, and acceptance of others' views — which explains the recent changes in the Iraqi media machine.

As is known, the Iraqi leadership has set March as a date for the parliamentary elections, and it is not ruled out that some independent Iraqi figures could be persuaded to run in the elections and that the right conditions may be secured to ensure the elections' success.

Iraq's agreement to engage in a dialogue with the United Nations over implementation of Resolution 986 aroused optimism among Iraqis inside the country, and the Iraqi dinar's value rose to 650 dinars to the dollar. It was 2,600 dinars to the dollar two weeks ago.

Oil experts in London say that Iraq's agreeing to sell some of its oil means pumping 750,000 barrels a day through the Turkish pipeline. The experts expect oil prices to drop by about $4 a barrel.

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI has learned that contacts are being made among OPEC member states to hold an emergency meeting to discuss Iraq's return to the market. Iraq's return is expected to be at the expense of Saudi Arabia, which compensated for Iraq's quota, making revenues totaling more than $80 billion over the past five years.

Jordanian sources in Amman have said that the Jordanian Government has abandoned its earlier plans and support for a federation in Iraq, in view of the Arab and Iraqi opposition it has encountered. It has expelled all the parties who encouraged it to take that road, such as Mish'an al-Juburi, who was prevented from entering Jordan after a trip to Damascus, and Nabil al-Janabi, who was told that he had better stay where he is now, outside Jordan.

The sources said that King Husayn of Jordan is now more careful when dealing with the Iraqi file, to avert a clash with Syria and Egypt, which are trying to form an axis with Iran to oppose Iraq's partition. Jordanian officials have begun to attribute the decision to reduce trade with Iraq to financial factors, since the Jordanian Government used to pay Jordanian traders $400 million, the value of this trade, in the hope of recovering this sum from Iraq later, whether in the form of oil or in cash.

The sources denied that Husayn Kamil is suffering from a nervous breakdown. However, they confirmed that he has seen a dentist in Jordan to have treatment for an infection.

The sources ruled out Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement, because the Iraqi leadership is fully aware that its Syrian counterpart is using the Iraqi card to improve its negotiation position with Israel and the United States, especially when the negotiations falter.

The sources said that Syria wants the go-ahead from the United States to intervene in Iraq. But the Jordanian sources do not believe that Damascus will be given such a card, at least for the time being. Thus Syria will work to sabotage any Jordanian role in Iraq. It is supported in this context by Egypt.

Meanwhile, the Qatari newspaper AL-SHARQ cited Arab diplomats in Tehran yesterday as saying that the Iraq issue could be a suitable channel through which to restore the severed relations between Iran and Egypt to their normal status.

The sources said that there is currently indirect coordination between the two countries over the Iraq question, pointing out that Egypt and Iran are making extensive efforts to prevent Iraq's partition and the fragmentation of its entity.

The newspaper cited informed Iranian sources as saying that Tehran supports the Egyptian diplomatic move

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on Iraq. It said that this move is being conducted on two levels: First, to persuade Iraq to implement the UN resolutions to facilitate Cairo's task, since Cairo is calling for lifting the blockade imposed on Iraq. Second, to persuade some Iraqi oppositionists not to get involved in revenge schemes against the regime, in order to avert Iraq's partition.

AL-SHARQ said that Egypt and Syria are currently working in UN corridors to prepare the atmosphere for lifting the blockade on Iraq and return Iraq to the international fold via the Cairo gateway.

Iraqi Oil-for-Food Talks Begin at UN

JN0602110696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0752 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 6 Feb (INA)—Iraq and the UN General Secretariat will begin an official dialogue on the oil-for-food formula this evening, Baghdad local time. Chief delegates Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari and Hans Corell will meet with journalists before proceeding to a special hall inside the UN building for the first round of dialogue.

The head of the Iraqi delegation arrived in New York yesterday, while the other members of the delegation arrived earlier.

Al-Anbari is accompanied by a delegation of senior officials from the Central Bank of Iraq and the Ministries of Oil, Trade, Health, and Industry. The UN delegation, led by Hans Corell, consists of specialists in humanitarian, legal, political, economic, and banking affairs.

Iraqi Official Says Goods To Be Transported to All Governorates

JN0602112696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0755 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 6 Feb (INA)—Sami al-Mashhadani, director general of Iraqi Land Transport Company [LTC], said the company's fleet is ready to transport goods and foodstuffs imported via the ports of al-'Aqabah and Umm Qasr.

In press statements published today, al-Mashhadani said the LTC fleet, which includes 321 trucks with a capacity of 40 tonnes per truck, is working persistently to ensure the transport of goods. He pointed out that the LTC seeks to increase the number of trucks to 1,000 in order to facilitate the transport of foodstuffs and other goods.

Al-Mashhadani said a joint committee has been set up from the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Transport and Communications to draw up plans to ensure the transport of goods from the ports to all Iraqi governorates.

The LTC, he added, is working with private and mixed transport companies to transport goods. In addition, he added, the Iraqi- Jordanian Transport Company — a shareholding company — is transporting foodstuffs on a fixed schedule.

Al-Mashhadani pointed out that the standard capacity of the truck fleet amounts to 12,000 tonnes and that the number of trips is determined by the volume of goods reaching the ports.

'Noticeable Drop' in Iraqi Food Prices Reported

JN0502211696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been a noticeable drop in the prices of foodstuffs in trade markets since the Trade Ministry offered large quantities of these commodities for sale to citizens at reduced prices at the Baghdad International Fair and central societies and markets.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY [INA] said that there was a fresh drop in the prices of some foodstuffs in wholesale and retail markets, particularly in the markets of al-Shurjah and vegetable markets, yesterday and today. The prices of other commodities remained the same. However, they may decrease from one hour to the next due to the increase in the offered commodities and quiet sale and purchase.

INA correspondent said that there has also been a drop in the prices of fruits, vegetables, meat, and milk byproducts. A Trade Ministry source said the ministry will continue to offer large quantities of foodstuffs and other commodities and sell them to citizens at reduced prices.

Iraq Central Bank Head Claims Dinar Possession Guarantees Savings

JN0502210196 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Isam Rashid Huwaysh, governor of the Central Bank of Iraq [CBI], has stressed that possession of the Iraqi dinar will continue to guarantee, safeguard, and develop savings.

The governor advised citizens to be patient and to analyze the economic and political situation thoroughly, stressing that the end of the blockade is inevitable after the results of the implementation of the contents of the letter of leader President Saddam Husayn, which was

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addressed to the Council of Ministers on 2 December, have begun to bear fruit, particularly in improving the Iraqi dinar's exchange rate.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent, he said: The recent difference in the U.S. dollar's exchange rate between the CBI and the market is due to the fact that some people have paid their financial obligations in dollars which have been withdrawn from circulation. However, this is a temporary situation, and it began to diminish today. The general prevailing situation has continued to be in favor of a drop in the exchange rates.

He called on citizens not to believe tendentious rumors.

Answering a question on the issuing of checks by the CBI and its branches in the governorates instead of accepting the dollar, Dr. 'Isam Rashid Huwaysh said: We resorted to this process for administrative reasons necessitated by the rush of a large number of citizens to replace the dollar deposits with the dinar.

He added that as of today the CBI and its branches have overcome this situation.

Concluding his statement, the CBI governor said that the CBI will issue small denominations of money in accordance with market requirements, adding that the state employees' next salaries will mainly be of the 25-dinar and five-dinar notes due to the expected growing demand for these notes in the coming days. He noted that there was an adequate supply of these notes in the CBI.

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Israel's Peres, Christopher Hold News Conference

TA0502164496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's shuttle mission between Jerusalem and Damascus went into high gear today. This afternoon, Christopher met with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. This evening he is scheduled to meet with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq and President 'Ezer Weizman. He wil leave for Damascus tomorrow morning. Our political correspondent Udi Segal was at a news conference given by Prime Minister Peres and Secretary of State Christopher:

[Begin recording] [Segal] The news conference held by Prime Minister Peres and Secretary of State Warren Christopher ended several minutes ago. At their meeting earlier, the two officials spent almost two hours discussing the negotiations with Syria and, no less importantly, the impact of early elections in Israel — if these are indeed moved up. The two men deliberated over what to tell Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and how best to deliver the message Peres has been trying to hammer through for almost a week: There is no connection between the Israeli elections and the negotiations with Syria.

When asked about this issue at the news conference, Peres said there is no need to deliver such a message because it is self-evident. Nevertheless, the link between the elections and the negotiations is manifestly clear. The very fact that the Syrians are setting the very slow pace of the negotiations is spurring Peres to call early elections. The prime minister will issue an official announcement only in 10 days, and even Warren Christopher was not told today whether Peres intends to call early elections.

[Christopher, in English] That is a decision that will have to be taken by the Israeli Government. I think it is much more appropriate for the prime minister to comment on that, as he has just been extensively doing. What I can say is that I believe we can continue the peace negotiations under any scenario here, and that is what it is our determination to do. Our role is to try to facilitate the negotiations and to press forward, and we shall do so under whatever scenario, whatever decision is made by the Israeli Government, which I say is peculiarly their decision to make.

[Segal translates above into Hebrew and continues] Peres basically expressed the same views as Christopher. The prime minister said that Israel hopes to achieve peace between Syria and Israel by the end of 1996 if possible, regardless of developments in Israel. When asked whether he had informed Christopher of his intentions, Peres gave the following brief reply:

[Peres] No. I will first announce my decision to the Israeli public.

[Segal] Even before Christopher arrived for their meeting today, Peres was asked for his reaction to the Likud-Tzomet agreement to form a joint list. Peres tried to appear unconcerned. He said that this would have absolutely no effect on the Labor Party.

[Peres] The Labor Party has a plan. This joint list may combine two factions but it has not created a plan. The public will have to choose between the Labor Party's known plan and the lack of planning for which the Likud is known.

[Segal] Afterward, in the same complacent manner, he wished Binyamin Netanyahu and Refa'el Eytan success, joking that although the two men are running together, they have no idea of their destination.

Christopher and Peres emphasized several points with regard to the negotiations with Syria. They both alluded to the improved atmosphere at the Wye Plantation talks and the fact that discussions on normalization and security arrangements had begun. Christopher explained that both parties now have a better understanding of their differences with regard to the security arrangements. There is still a great deal of work ahead, Christopher concluded, managing to sound optimistic nonetheless. Both men voiced positive assessments, noting the possibilities of making progress but not a breakthrough. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1500 GMT on 5 February carries a related report, adding that "both Christopher and Peres said they are very satisfied with the way the negotiations have been conducted at the Wye Plantation." The report notes that Peres "said the situation is no longer the same as it was before the negotiations. The prime minister hinted that the negotiations may be moved from the Wye Plantation in Maryland. He said we are preparing for a continuation of the talks at the Wye Plantation or anywhere else."]

Israel, U.S. Reportedly Disagree Over Next Stage of Talks

TA0502191896 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The United States and Israel are in disagreement with regard to the next stage of the negotiations between Syria and Israel. The Americans want to begin detailed discussions on the security

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arrangements, whereas Israel believes that preliminary clarifications are still needed.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met this afternoon with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq. Israeli delegation head Uri Savir reports that at the last round of talks at Wye Plantation, the Syrians expressed readiness for flexibility regarding the security arrangements.

Our correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that Jerusalem sees the negative reports in the Syrian media on the negotiations as a reaction to the possibility of early elections in Israel disrupting the negotiations. [passage omitted]

Israel: U.S. To Present Ideas for Bridging Gap With Syria

TA0202143196 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 2 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Avino'am Bar-Yosef in Washington, Shefi Gabay, Yo'av Limor, and Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At this stage, the U.S. Administration rejects the Syrian demand to come up with a plan to resolve the Israeli-Syrian conflict.

Syria appealed to the United States to force a settlement on Israel that would include a withdrawal from all of the Golan Heights and has more limited security arrangements than Israel initially demanded. Sources in Washington told MA'ARIV that the Americans think that a proposal that could satisfy Syria would not be acceptable to the Israeli public at this stage. The Americans believe, therefore, that it is preferable at the moment to offer oral ideas to bridge the gaps on specific points.

These ideas will be raised during Warren Christopher's visit to Jerusalem, which begins on 4 February, earlier than originally planned. Christopher will come to the region on a five-day shuttle, which will also include Riyadh. American sources believe that shortly after his return to Washington, the Israeli and Syrians delegations will hold another round of Wye Plantation talks. [passage omitted]

Golan Yusifon adds: Moshe Yisre'eli, adviser to the water commissioner in the peace negotiations, said yesterday that "two-thirds of Israel's water resources are subject to negotiations or will be demanded by the Palestinians, the Lebanese, and, when the time comes, also by the Syrians."

U.S. Officials Impatient With Israel's Peres' Demands

TA0202124796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 2 Feb 96 p 9

[Article by Steve Rodan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Next week Warren Christopher arrives in the Middle East for his 17th visit as US secretary of state; he has traveled to this region more times than to such powers as Russia, China or Britain.

As he did 16 times before, Christopher will start his trip in Israel, listen to the assessments of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq and sound them out for what they hope to hear from Syria during his current shuttle. Then he will fly to Damascus and sit for hours with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and listen to his positions and determine his willingness to meet the Israeli positions.

It's a job that requires unlimited patience and an ability to cut through rhetoric and determine the real positions of Israel and Syria — essentially the kind of work Christopher, an attorney by training is cut out for. But even for Christopher, 17 times might be too much.

"He feels a certain impatience," says Martin Indyk, the US ambassador to Israel. "He wants the pace of the negotiations accelerated."

Although none of them has done so publicly, US officials are grumbling these days. They complain that the Clinton administration is working at a furious pace to bring Israel and Syria to a model peace while the Peres government is being sidetracked by election fever.

Suddenly, the US officials say, their Israeli counterparts have been upping the price for an accord with Syria. The late prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin made it clear that what mattered to him was security arrangements on the Golan Heights. Peres wants that plus normalization between Damascus and Jerusalem as well as a comprehensive peace with virtually the entire Arab world.

Indyk, during an address to Bar-Ilan University's BESA Center for Strategic Studies on Wednesday, disclosed that a week before his death Rabin had agreed that the US would "broker" an accord on security arrangements on the Golan Heights during the first quarter of 1996 after the passage of the state budget through the Knesset. This agreement included US presentation of a so-called "non-paper" that would spell out the principles and aims of security arrangements between Israel and Syria.

Rabin's death placed the US plans on hold and Peres has diverted the Syrian-Israel talks into other areas, primarily economic cooperation. Indeed, both US and

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Israeli diplomatic sources say Peres has decided that he wants the Israeli-Syrian peace to be at least as warm as that with Jordan.

"If we would be satisfied with an Egyptian-type peace, we could have already concluded something with Syria," an Israeli diplomat says.

US officials have mixed feelings toward Peres. They acknowledge that Peres has been the driving force behind the agreements with both Jordan and the PLO. His dynamism has moved the international community to support his vision of a new Middle East.

On the other hand the officials say Peres is far more complex than Rabin and thus it is more difficult to pin down exactly what his position is.

"Rabin will say no and we know he means it," a US diplomatic source says. "Peres will say yes and we'll find out later that what he actually meant was 'Yes, but...'"

Still, Clinton, who admires Peres's bold ideas on changing this region, has agreed to the prime minister's new approach. US officials say Christopher has brought what they say is al-Asad's consent to normalization and comprehensive Arab peace with Israel, and Peres's aides — if not Peres himself — still seem unsatisfied.

"There is this concept of pocketing things, saying its absolutely essential and then when you get it saying it's not so important anymore," a US official says.

The bottom line is that Israel is looking for al-Asad to make more and more gestures to convince Israelis that the Golan Heights is worth giving up. US officials say the goal is so ill-defined it is virtually impossible to fulfill.

"Here, I think we're constantly moving the goalposts," one official says.

Over the past two weeks, Christopher and his aides have argued that Syria has gone a long way toward meeting Israeli demands. They say the Syrian president has cracked down on Hizballah attacks in south Lebanon at the cost of strained relations with Iran. He has also agreed to give Israel a free hand in forming relations with any country in the Arab world.

Suddenly, the US official say, Peres's aides, including senior ministers, are playing it cool.

"Now the skeptics say what's the big deal in having relations with 20 Arab states," the official says. "That's what I mean by moving goalposts."

Some officials are beginning to question the wisdom of what is perhaps the most spectacular card in the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations — a summit sponsored by US President Bill Clinton, who would invite al-Asad and Peres along with numerous other Arab leaders to a ceremony to formally end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Al-Asad, the officials say, has agreed to such a meeting after he is assured that his demands for full withdrawal from the Golan would be met.

The question is when such a meeting should take place. US officials are concerned that unless it is held on the eve of Israeli elections or a referendum on the Golan, the euphoria generated by such a summit would soon dissipate.

"By the time the summit is over, there would be those saying it's no longer a big deal," a US official says.

Israeli officials respond that behind the muted complaints of Christopher's peace team is a serious disagreement over what al-Asad has actually committed himself to. The argument began in January 1994, after Clinton's meeting with al-Asad in Geneva. The head of the US State Department's peace team, Dennis Ross, asserted that al-Asad had agreed to full peace and normalization.

Rabin and his aides disagreed. Then-IDF [Israel Defense Forces] chief of military intelligence Maj.-Gen Uri Sagi dissected the transcript of the al-Asad-Clinton meeting and argued that the Syrian president was merely rehashing old positions and statements.

Today, Israeli officials close to Peres maintain that since then, al-Asad has hardly budged from his position. They say the Syrian president's so-called consent to normalization is so vague that it can mean anything.

They say that the US and Israel agreed that they would obtain a two-page accord on principles of a peace agreement with Syria. So far, al-Asad has agreed to no more than a sentence.

"As far as we can see, the only thing he's agreed to is that we can fly our flag in Damascus," a senior aide to Peres says. "That is being presented as normalization."

Other senior officials go further. They say the rosy US assessment of al-Asad's position is meant to convince Peres to say clearly what both he and Rabin have been strongly suggesting for the last three and a half years: that Israel will withdraw fully from the Golan Heights. Israeli diplomatic sources say Peres told the Clinton administration that he would decide on such a step after the next Christopher shuttle.

"The pressure is on us to say that we will withdraw to the June 4, 1967, borders," one senior official says. "We're not going to do that. We just can't sell such an agreement to the public."

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The reason, officials say, is that this would be seen as capitulation. It would wreck Israel's demand for water rights of the tributaries to the Kinneret as well as to the lake itself. It would mean renewing the bitter disputes with Syria over the control of the eastern shore of the Kinneret as well as legitimizing Damascus's capture of territory from Israel.

US officials disagree. They say Israel can agree to full withdrawal while the US would help ensure that its water needs would be met. Moreover, an announcement of full withdrawal need not be specific, thus leading to a compromise between Israel's unofficial consent to pull back to what it regards as the international border and Syria's demand for an evacuation to the June 4 line.

Aides to Peres say the prime minister has quietly toughened his position over the past few weeks. They say he is playing a game of brinkmanship, giving al-Asad several more weeks to either change his position or convene Peres's long-awaited Arab summit with Israel. The alternative would be early Israeli elections in May or June that would delay important Israeli decisions on the peace talks until perhaps next year.

Already, the aides say, Peres faces a veritable opposition to an Israeli withdrawal to the June 4, 1967, line. This includes the entire IDF brass, Minister Yosi Beilin and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq.

Baraq's agreement to a Syrian deal is vital, the aides say, to convince Israelis that national security has been maintained. But Baraq remains opposed to a full withdrawal.

"He hasn't changed his position one iota since he was chief of staff," an official says.

One senior official says Syrian rejection of an Israeli offer for a withdrawal to the international border has pushed Peres to support early national elections. This despite Peres's refrain that his deliberations over early elections have nothing to do with the current talks with Syria.

"If Shim'on agreed to move up the elections, it means nothing is happening," the official said.

Such a prospect would certainly dishearten Christopher. He has planned for intensive negotiations over the next six months that would culminate in an announcement of an agreement by July. This would leave enough time for Israel and the US to conduct their elections in the fall.

As Israeli diplomatic sources see it, Christopher plans to retire after the US elections. He has been hoping that he could follow up his success in achieving peace in Bosnia with one that would end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But if Christopher can't achieve this, he will do no more than grumble. US officials say the Clinton administration will smother Israel with affection and aid, but will not apply pressure.

Indeed, Baraq says that Clinton told him during the foreign minister's trip to Washington last week that the substance of the negotiations rather that its timetable is the key to a successful peace effort.

As a result, US officials say they won't force any of their ideas on either Israel or Syria. Any proposals meant to bridge the gap between the two sides will wait until both Israel and Syria want it.

"Our role is that of a facilitator," Indyk says. "We are not an imposer of anything. We will work with Israel, not against it."

Date of Israeli Hebron Pullout Reportedly Tied to Charter Amendment

TA0502160096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 5 Feb 96 p A4

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Text] "If the Palestinian Charter is not amended, the evacuation of Hebron may be delayed." This was stated yesterday in internal discussions by defense establishment personnel, which were attended by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers and defense establishment experts. The participants assessed the continuation of the peace process with the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the threat of terror by the opposition to the PA.

The experts said that the political echelons have established a linkage between the amendment of the charter clauses and the evacuation of Hebron, scheduled for 28 March. The Palestinians have pledged to Israel and the United States that two months after the self-government council convenes for the first time, they will amend the clauses that call for the destruction of Israel. From the briefings, it emerged that "there is a certain rapprochement" between the PA and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], which has been expressed in meetings between representatives of the parties held in a bid to attain some agreement or participation in the PA institutions.

Israeli intelligence sources noted that Hamas would like to take part in the municipal elections that will be held in the coming months. It is believed that Hamas wants to take part in the municipal elections despite its boycott of the PA Council elections. It is believed that Hamas has more power on the municipal level and that its strength might be further eroded if it does not partake in the municipal elections. The sources also believe that

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if Hamas continues terror attacks and fails to take part in the political life within the PA, it will not be allowed to participate in the elections. It is believed that Hamas has realized that the Palestinian public does not support terror attacks because it prefers a quiet, stable economy and employment in Israel to being under closure as in the past.

The sources believe that the PA is giving Hamas a bear hug: It is bringing Hamas into the fold while taking over some of the activities Hamas has been engaged in so far. For example, the PA has started handing out meat to needy families — especially now, during the month of Ramadan — and has assumed other humanitarian activities that used to be a Hamas stronghold and contributed to its popularity. The PA has been trying to take control of the clinics in the refugee camps and assume other social roles that have been monopolized by Islamic fundamentalist organizations to date.

Regarding the convention of the Palestinian National Council [PNC], the intelligence sources believe that Yasir 'Arafat has a list of 200 names of PNC members who wish to come to the territories. 'Arafat has not yet presented the list for Israel's approval.

The participants in the meetings expressed various views regarding the linkage between the talks with the Syrians and the negotiations with the Palestinians. It is believed that if the negotiations with the Syrians reach a deadlock, this might hinder the Palestinian willingness to convene the PNC. One of the reasons why PNC members feel they should join the peace process is their fear that Syria might move ahead with the peace process and hurt Palestinian organizations currently under its auspices. Members of those organizations have recently expressed the fear that the first thing Damascus will do is undermine their operations, thus forcing the organization members to move out of Syria and Lebanon to Iran.

The intelligence sources also believe that 'Arafat will eventually — perhaps within a short time — succeed in amending the charter. An IDF Intelligence Branch source stated that 'Arafat is willing to amend the charter.

It is also believed that several additional Arab countries would like to take part in the peace process and that despite their maintaining "a slow pace," they will join eventually.

Israel Objects to Palestinian Representative in Cyprus

NC0502223096 Paris AFP in English 2136 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Feb 5 (AFP)— Israel protested to Cyprus on Monday [5 February] after it recognized the senior PLO official on the Mediterranean island as the representative of the Palestinian Authority.

Israel's deputy foreign minister, Eli Dayan, said the accords granting the Palestinians limited self-rule forbade the Palestinian Authority from having representation abroad. "Israel is opposed categorically to such a designation because it contradicts the autonomy accords signed between Israel and the PLO," he wrote, according to Israeli officials. The accord extending self-rule which was signed in Washington on September 28, 1995 said the autonomy council elected last month would have no power or responsibility in the domain of external affairs.

In Nicosia, the PLO representative at the centre of the dispute, Samir Abu-Ghazalah, said he was "astonished" by the Israeli protest. He told AFP that all official PLO representatives abroad, whatever their title or diplomatic status, had represented the Palestinian Authority since it was created in the first stage of autonomy in 1994. He cited as three examples the Palestinian representatives to Jordan, Egypt and Qatar, who he said already had the title of representative of the Palestinian Authority.

Israeli Security Sources: PA Has Not Damaged Hamas Infrastructure

TA0602064296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The security establishment says the Palestinian Authority [PA] has not damaged the infrastructure of the military wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the territories and is not fighting with the aim of destroying Hamas.

Security sources estimate that Hamas is abstaining from carrying out attacks on civilian targets so as no to disrupt the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] pullout from Hebron and the elections in Israel. According to the sources, Hamas is likely to renew its attacks after the elections and with the negotiations on a permanent settlement in order to obtain concessions from Israel to the PA.

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Israeli Security Sources Deny Delaying PNC Members' Arrival

TA0302141496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salim al-Za'nun, the deputy speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], claims that Israel is holding up PNC members' arrival in the territories where they seek to convene the council. Al-Za'nun asserted that although Israel was handed a list of the 160 PNC members who wish to return to the territories a week ago, the Israeli Government has still not granted its permission.

Israeli security sources told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that no such request had been received from the Palestinian Authority. The PLO's Executive Committee will meet in al-'Arish on 5 February in order to dispatch the invitations for the PNC's convention.

Peres Said Set on Early Elections in Israel; Announcement in 2 Weeks

TA0402071696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Labor Party sources say Prime Minister Peres will announce early elections within two weeks, even though the decision has already been taken. Peres will justify the decision for early elections by claiming the need for a new mandate from the public. Labor officials are still talking about two possible dates: the 21st or the 28th of May.

The Likud issued a statement yesterday welcoming the possibility of early elections, but also criticizing Shim'on Peres, reminding him that after the Rabin assassination he announced he would not use the murder to Labor's political advantage. Knesset Member David Levi, who will head his own party at the next elections, says he welcomes an early poll.

The Likud party is expected to adopt a new policy which rejects the Oslo peace agreements but at the same time accepts what would be termed the resulting realities. Qol Yisra'el's reporter says that Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu has backed down from his plans for a new and detailed political program, because the Likud leadership remains split on the issue. Instead, Netanyahu will introduce a number of principles concerning the future of negotiations with the Palestinians. He will reject negotiations with the PLO, although under certain conditions will negotiate with the Palestinian Authority representatives, but not with Yasir 'Arafat.

Israel's Peres' Early Elections Reasoning Rejected, Rethinking Urged

TA0402122896 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 4 Feb 96 p 7

[Editorial: "No Need To Advance"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Knesset Member Ra'anan Kohen, Labor Knesset faction whip, announced on 2 February that he intends to meet his Likud counterpart Moshe Qatzav in order to set a date for early elections for the Knesset and the prime minister both big parties could agree to at the end of May or the beginning of June,

Kohen's initiative did not take place in a vacuum. While in Davos, the prime minister's entourage issued numerous reports saying Shim'on Peres has already decided to advance the elections. Several senior Labor members further bolstered the hints from Peres' direction. Some of them — including Finance Minister Avraham Shohat; Hagay Merom, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee; and Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss — have recently stated, each in his personal style, that early elections are a fact.

Shlomo Raz, Qol Yisra'el's political correspondent, who accompanied Peres on his European tour, reported yesterday that "senior Israeli sources in Davos" — and one need not be a great expert in Israeli politics to know who they are — pointed to three issues that have had an impact on Peres' decision to advance the elections: Unstable labor relations in Israel and the fear that high wage demands will be presented; the need to set a new agenda for the Middle East in view of "the new reality that will be created by the year 2000;" and the fact that the Knesset members are already engaged in their party primaries.

None of the above arguments is really convincing. The Israeli economy is experiencing one of its best periods ever. Despite the labor crisis at Uman and several other factories, labor relations in Israel have not been so calm for quite a long time. Use of the argument that the elections should be advanced to avoid wage claims that may be presented between now and the elections, does no good to the credibility of the one who uses it.

This is twice as true regarding the second argument that the senior sources in Davos used to explain Peres' decision. Setting the agenda for the Middle East in the third millennia can wait until October 1996. At the same time, the fact that Knesset members are busy with the primaries is not a good enough reason to advance the Knesset elections. At best, it could justify advancing the primaries.

Labor, however, does have some real good reasons for advancing the elections. The polls are predicting

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a sweeping victory, mainly by its leader, and the fear that this advantage might erode with time is a more convincing reason than those sounded off at Davos — but it is not nice to talk about it in public. The desire to take advantage of the ideological confusion the Likud is experiencing is also a legitimate reason to want to advance the elections.

On the other hand, there are not less serious reasons for not advancing the elections. In opting for the ballot boxes, Shim'on Peres and his party might, contrary to their true intention, sentence the negotiations with Syria to at least one year of sitting on ice. Everybody knows that peace with Syria will not be attained without the massive involvement of the U.S. Administration. But, in June or July, after Peres completes forming his new government after winning the early elections, President Clinton will be massively involved in his own election campaign. If he wins, he could find the time to deal with the Israeli-Syrian issue at the end of November at the soonest. If he loses, his successor will need another six months before he can start intervening.

The impression over recent days is that it will be very hard to stop the election train. Nevertheless, those involved in making the decision are advised to hit the brakes anyway, if only to give the matter a rethink.

Israeli Political Party Stands on Early Elections Reported

TA0502150296

[FBIS Report] Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 5 February carries a report on page A2 by Yerah Tal on the varying stands of Israeli political parties with regard to early elections. According to the report, "members of the HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] Knesset faction, who form part of the government's blocking majority, expressed their opposition to early elections yesterday. Coalition Chairman Ra'anan Kohen believes that once Peres announces his decision on the matter, HADASH will change its stand. The same is true with regard to Meretz, which despite its fears that early elections will harm the peace process has already declared that it will accept them if Peres so decides. Support for early elections is also expected from David Levi, Tzomet, Moledet, the National Religious Party [NRP], and Degel Hatora."

The paper adds that "in an official announcement, the Likud welcomed Peres' declared intention to move the elections up. Senior Likud officials believe, however, that May is an inconvenient time which gives Peres a clear advantage.

"The Likud officials explained that it will be difficult for Netanyahu to narrow the wide gap between him and the prime minister by then. The Likud, therefore, prefers July."

A report by Yosi Algazi on the same page of HA'ARETZ says that "Knesset Member 'Abd-al-Wahhab Darawshah, chairman of the Arab Democratic Party, prefers that the elections be held as scheduled. In his opinion, the government can make better use of the months remaining until the elections in order to pursue the peace process with the Palestinians and continue the talks with Syria."

The report adds that "Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi said last night that the Arab Movement for Change welcomes the initiative to hold early elections."

Israeli Poll Gauges Impact of Likud-Tzomet List on Balance of Power

TA0502191196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Here are the full results of a poll specially conducted today by the Teleseqer company for Channel 2 Television. The poll shows that if the Likud and Tzomet run on a joint list in the Knesset elections, there will be no significant change in the balance of power between the right-wing bloc and the Labor Party. When the pollsters asked how the respondents would vote if the Knesset elections were held today with the Likud and Tzomet running separately, the results indicated that the Likud would receive 31 Knesset seats, Tzomet six, the Labor Party 43, and Meretz eight. If the Likud and Tzomet were to run today on a joint list, they would win a total of 37 Knesset seats, Labor would remain with 43 seats, and Meretz with eight. If direct elections were held today for the premiership, Binyamin Netanyahu would win 30.9 percent of the vote, Refa'el Eytan 4.8 percent, and Shim'on Peres 40.3 percent. If Refa'el Eytan decides not to run against Binyamin Netanyahu, the latter's support would increase to 42 percent of the vote, with support for Peres climbing to 46 percent.

Main Points of Emerging Israeli Likud Platform Reported

TA0402110296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 4 Feb 96 p A5

[Report by Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In its meetings today and tomorrow, the Likud political forum will try to decide whether it should change its stand on the PLO and the Oslo agreement. The intention is to forge a stand

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that will be acceptable to most of the forum members, who are senior Likud members. After two weeks of extensive discussions, there seems to be no consensus. Senior Likud members estimated, however, that the differences can be bridged. According to the emerging stand, the Likud is willing to give the Palestinians less than 30 percent of the territories, only for the purpose of autonomy. [passage omitted]

The disagreement is over the question of how the Likud should present its stand on the Oslo agreements. An understanding has emerged in the discussions that the Likud will not explicitly announce that it accepts the Oslo agreements; just the contrary: It will state that the agreements are bad and signing them was an historic mistake. At the same time, in view of this stand, the Likud will declare that it must take into consideration the reality that the agreements have created on the ground — meaning, the withdrawal from large West Bank cities — but, a Likud-led government will try to prevent the handing over of additional territories to the Palestinian Authority [PA]. Also, if there are grave violations of the Oslo accords, the Likud will take steps to erode PA control over the West Bank cities. Some even suggested that the Likud express a willingness to give small territories from Area B, the rural region, to the PA, but be determined to keep the rest of the territories, some 70 percent, under full and exclusive Israeli control.

According to the formulas the leadership is drafting, the Likud will maintain that the main difference between it and Labor is that its stands will prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza; while the Labor-Meretz policy will essentially lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Regarding recognition of the PA and the willingness to talk to Yasir 'Arafat, the emerging stand says that the Likud will announce it is rejecting recognition of the PLO and will even demand that it be disbanded. At the same time, it will express a willingness to recognize the elected representation of the Palestinians in the territories, the PA. Nevertheless, the recognition of the PA and the willingness to hold a dialogue with it will be made conditional on amending the clauses of the Palestinian Covenant that call for the destruction of Israel, and on a full Palestinian implementation of their commitments under the Oslo agreements. The Likud has listed more than 150 cases in which the PA violated the accords. Another condition the Likud has set is that 'Arafat and the PA prove they are fighting to abolish Palestinian terrorism.

On the Golan Heights issue, there is full agreement that the Likud must present an unequivocal stand against a withdrawal on or from the Golan Heights. [passage omitted]

Poll Gauges Israel's Netanyahu's Chances if Likud Recognizes Oslo

TA0202195596 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Report by political editor Gadi Sukenik]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A poll conducted by Teleseqer for Channel 2 shows that 60 percent of Likud voters are in favor of Binyamin Netanyahu accepting the Oslo accords and negotiating with Yasir 'Arafat. [passage omitted]

The poll also shows that Shim'on Peres is at present significantly ahead of Netanyahu. We asked whether Netanyahu's chances of winning the elections would improve if he recognized the Oslo accords. The outcome: Some 25 percent of the general public responded affirmatively, while 13 percent said no. [passage omitted]

Israel's Peres Interviewed on Regional Economic Issues

TA0202131896 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT (MAMON supplement) in Hebrew 2 Feb 96 pp 3-5

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Dov Genachowsky, Gad Li'or, Gid'on 'Eshet, and 'Eran Klein; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [YEDI'OT AHARONOT] You say that negotiations with Syria are making progress. Would you like to elaborate, mainly in view of the Arab fear that Israel might economically conquer their economies?

[Peres] Some fear and some do not. Some suspect Israel of everything, so they believe this too. Just as they used to say that we seek territorial domination, they say today that there is a map in the Knesset showing exactly where we are going to spread. It takes all kinds.

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] They say there is a map at Likud headquarters...

[Peres] The Likud headquarters is packed with gems. Israel does not need the Middle East economically but, for political reasons, Israel wants the Middle East economically stable. To say it in simple words: The higher the standard of living in Arab countries, the higher the chance that violence will drop. Our gain is simply political.

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[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] What are we talking about with the Syrians?

[Peres] We talk about bilateral economic relations that include several basic problems that must be thoroughly solved. Water, for example; both countries lack water. Water could come down from Turkey to Syria, from there to Lebanon, to Israel, to Jordan, and to the Palestinians. Politics run the other around. There is a water shortage, and we need to build new pipelines and desalinate water at enormous costs. It is also important to connect electric grids. One of the most important things is to develop regional tourism. It brings quiet and tranquility, and creates an interest in maintaining a peaceful and calm atmosphere.

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] What kind of progress was made?

[Peres] I am in favor of buying power, not only oil, from the Arabs. I do not see a need for additional power plants in Israel. If we get 10 to 20 percent of our electric power from Arab countries, it would be a blessing.

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] Who will sell us power? After all, they have the same problem as we do with imported oil, and Egypt has little surplus power?

[Peres] I do not want to tell you who. Believe me, I know who, but I do not want to tell you. All those who think they will not sell, will sell. Egypt has plenty of gas. Future power stations will burn gas, not coal or oil. Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia have gas. At the same time, we can go in a different direction: Why should we buy gas? We can buy power. If I trust their gas, why shouldn't I rely on their power supply? The same holds for roads. I do not want additional roads in Israel. Are we short of traffic accidents? I would not mind if regional highways ran outside Israel.

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] This sounds very expensive. Where will the money come from?

[Peres] When I say there is progress, it is based on the fact that, for the first time, the Syrians are showing as much interest in the economy as they do in security. As for the financing, we are talking about a consortium of donor countries, similarly to the body set up to aid the Palestinians. I know that the Americans will find this hard to stomach. There is a problem with the budget in the Congress because of the disagreements between the Republicans and the Democrats. We are currently speaking of comprehensive peace. The Syrians love it and the Americans love it.

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] What about the Europeans?

[Peres] I had an interesting conversation with Germany's Chancellor Kohl last week. I asked for European participation in executing the major enterprise of comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Kohl told me something that I liked and wish to pursue. He said: We are willing to tell every country that makes peace with you that it will have the right to become an associate member of the EEC. It may well be that the Middle East could meet in the European economic zone in a way that would give cooperation a new flavor.

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] Does this mean that you are for starting a sort of common market in the region?

[Peres] I am for introducing a new economy into the Middle East. Today, half the world engages in market economy and the other half deals with nationalistic economy — which is really the difference between the rich and the poor. Whoever enters a market economy in Asia and South America gains; those who stay behind experience economic set backs. [passage omitted]

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] Is there any progress on the Saudi track in, for example, an authorization for El Al to fly over Saudi airspace, the oil issue, or other matters?

[Peres] Even if there are signals, I will not tell you. I do not want to say a word about Saudi Arabia. I do not need their denials.

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT] There are still problems with the Americans on trade issues. They asked us to change the car taxation policies. Are they pressuring us?

[Peres] The entire issue has boiled down to car taxation and has become more symbolic in nature. I consider the decision to change the car taxation system a kind of a gesture. After all, the United States has been so very helpful to us. [passage omitted]

Israeli Army Chief Notes 'Unexplainable' Drop in Hizballah Activity

TA0502143196 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 5 Feb 96 p 8

[Report by Ben Kaspit and Yehuda Goren]

[FBIS Translated Text] "There has been an unexplainable but significant decline in Hizballah activities," Lieutenant General Amnon Shahaq, chief of staff, informed the cabinet yesterday. Shahaq said the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is unable to pinpoint the exact reasons for the drop in Hizballah's attacks. He did not rule out the possibility of Syrian influence.

Despite the optimistic report, two IDF soldiers were very slightly injured yesterday from mortar fired by terrorists at an IDF position in the al-Rayhan area in the eastern sector of south Lebanon.

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The bombs landed inside the position, and two soldiers were injured by shrapnel. They were treated on the spot. The IDF spokesman announced that the fire came from an inhabited area. The IDF and the SLA [South Lebanese Army] returned fire.

Also at the cabinet meeting, the chief of staff informed the cabinet of a general drop in the number of terrorist attacks in Israel and the security zone in south Lebanon, noting, however, that warnings about suicide attacks are still being received and that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad have not abandoned their plans to avenge the death of Fathi al-Shaqaqi and of Yahya 'Ayyash, "The Engineer," by carrying out attacks against Israel.

The chief of staff described the liquidation of two terrorists by the Palestinian security services two days ago as an almost historic event. The chief of staff said this was the first time the Palestinian security services have stormed and killed Islamic terrorists.

The cabinet meeting also addressed the issue of the trans-Israel highway. Ministers Yosi Sarid, Yosi Beilin, and Ya'aqov Tzur proposed reopening the discussion on the road's construction and setting up a ministerial committee to examine its desirability, but the cabinet defeated the proposal by a majority of 12 to six.

Israeli Society for Pollard Set Up; Peres Notes 'Grave Offenses'

TA0502161196 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 5 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Menahem Rahat, 'Ada Kohen, and Golan Yosifun]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] When U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrives at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem today, he will be met by a group of demonstrators demanding that Jonathan Pollard, the spy, be released.

The establishment of a public society for Pollard is being completed these days. It will be called The People for Pollard and will be made up of civilians concerned about Pollard's welfare, heads of student organizations, heads of senior citizens groups, and other public figures. [passage omitted]

At the same time, it has been reported that, for the first time since Israel started working for a pardon for Pollard, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stated that Pollard committed "grave offenses" against the United States. It has been reported that Pollard heard of this remark in his prison cell and was furious about it.

In a letter to Likud Knesset Member Yosi Ahime'ir, in response to the latter's demand that efforts for the release of Pollard be doubled, Peres said: "The Government of Israel will continue to do everything it can to convey to the U.S. Administration our wish for Pollard's release," Peres writes.

"This wish," Peres continues, "is based on the humanitarian aspect in view of the long period of time that has elapsed since his arrest and the great changes in the world, without, of course, playing down the grave offenses against the United States of which he was convicted."

Ahime'ir said in response that Peres' reply is disappointing. "In this answer of his, Peres has done Pollard more harm than good. Peres is groveling before the Americans when he says that Pollard committed serious offenses." [passage omitted]

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Jordan's al-Kabariti Chairs First Session of New Cabinet

JN0502141796 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers held its first session today under Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. The council reviewed the principles that will govern the work of the new government, in light of the letter of designation.

Al-Kabariti stressed the importance of teamwork to ensure a better performance by the new government. He said the government will follow the directives of His Majesty King Husayn and will fulfill its national mission honestly and sincerely. In doing so, the government will demonstrate loyalty and belonging to this homeland and its inspired leadership.

The prime minister said contact with the people is a prime objective of the government to generate more constructive interaction among the various sectors of society. This will preserve the country's political and economic achievements.

Al-Kabariti urged his ministerial team to work in a responsible and integral manner and to keep in touch with the news media to provide a true and accurate picture of this government's performance. He praised the distinguished performance of His Highness Prince Zayd Bin-Shakir, former prime minister, who dealt with national issues responsibly and sincerely. The former government made remarkable achievements in a short, but difficult period, on both the national and foreign levels.

Al-Kabariti Remarks at Amman Cabinet Session

JN0502192296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has said that the government will be guided by the bases and principles of the letter of designation. He said that the government will apply and implement the contents of this letter in a civilized and democratic manner that will ultimately serve the interests of the homeland and the citizen.

Addressing the first session of the cabinet this morning, al-Kabariti said that the outstanding performance of every minister is what distinguishes the government's policy, services, stands, and method of work. This is reflected by the citizen's impression through what he senses in terms of objective facts that affect his daily life.

The prime minister urged the ministers to cooperate, interact, and keep in constant contact with the media bodies to follow up any issue at the ministries and official institutions concerned. This is so that these media bodies would convey to the citizen what the government is doing and the services it is extending to the citizens and thus, make the government's responsibility clear in a direct and accurate manner.

Al-Kabariti added that outstanding performance by any minister would reflect positively on the government. He hoped that cooperation and democratic dialogue would be the slogan we champion with conviction inside the cabinet.

The prime minister stressed the need for solidarity and to commit ourselves to what our duty dictates toward the leadership, the homeland, and the citizen. He said that the selection of ministers was made according to standards governed by public opinion. He stressed that he was not subjected to any pressures in choosing any of these ministers, noting that every quarter that was consulted gave him a full mandate to select the one who is most suitable, capable, and fair. He added: This is what I find in everyone of you.

The prime minister urged the members of his cabinet to hold consultations when they face any problem to find the suitable solution for it. He also urged them to resort to objectivity, facts, and sound decision.

Al-Kabariti said that the cabinet's function should be institutionalized in which four committees and a services council will be formed under the minister of interior. He noted that there will also be an inner cabinet headed by the minister of interior, which, he said, will be an extension of their cabinet.

He said that through experience, and due to the nature of things, we will be subjected to great pressures. He added every government has faced criticism, and there is no shame in this. He called on the ministers to pursue close contacts with citizens and to fully perform their mission.

The prime minister praised the achievements of al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir's government and the services it offered to citizens in all fields.

Jordanian Deputies Said Likely To Support New Government

JN0502152596 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 5 Feb 96 pp 1-2

[Report by Sa'idah al-Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Judging by its make-up, the government of Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti is likely to easily win Parliament's

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support when it seeks a vote of confidence in the Lower House.

Deputies representing various parliamentary blocs told the JORDAN TIMES on Sunday that they will, in principle, vote in favour of the new government but their final decision will be based on Mr. al-Kabariti's response in his Cabinet's policy statement to demands they made during consultations they held with him over the past several days.

Although the three mainstream parliamentary blocs, the Democratic Parliamentary Coalition (seven members), the National Action Front (16 members) and the Jordanian National Front (nine members), insisted that Mr. al-Kabariti should give ministerial portfolios to their blocs that correspond to their weight in Parliament, they all said they will vote for the government. Not only that, they also anticipated radical changes in the government's internal policies, particularly in regard to public freedoms and human rights.

Opposition in Parliament is divided. While the 16 member Islamic Action Front Party bloc insists on its stand of withholding confidence since "Mr. al-Kabariti said he can't stop the peace process," leftist deputies are likely to give Mr. al-Kabariti's government a vote of confidence although they too oppose the Arab-Israeli peace process.

"Mr. al-Kabariti cannot revoke the peace treaty and it is no longer the responsibility of the government. It is now up to the House to do the job," leftist deputy Tujan Faysal told the JORDAN TIMES. "What we demand is an improvement of the situation (at the national level). Mr. al-Kabariti responded positively when we (independent deputies) raised the issue (during a meeting yesterday) of the need to safeguard public liberties...it is based on this that I will evaluate the new government."

Ms. Faysal had voted against the governments of al-Sharif Zayd Bin Shakir and 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali. But this time it is different, she said.

"I had very good reasons for withholding confidence from the al- Majali and the al-Sharif Zayd Governments," Ms. Faysal said. But "I have nothing against Mr. al-Kabariti. His political record is very recent."

The only female deputy said she would vote for the new Cabinet in principle, but she would wait until the final make-up of the new government was determined before she decides.

The announcement of the formation of the Cabinet came late in the evening yesterday.

Ms. Faysal's stand is shared by other leftist and independent deputies.

Bassam Haddadin, also leftist, said that Mr. al-Kabariti showed a genuine intention of enhancing public freedoms and applying the rule of law.

"If pressures are alleviated on Mr. al-Kabariti, then there, will be positive change," said Mr. Haddadin.

Centrist Deputy Muhammad 'Addub al-Zabn said that he will vote in favour of the government if its policy statement undertook to tackle issue like unemployment and poverty in the Kingdom.

Independent Deputy 'Abdallah al-Nusur, now minister of higher education, said the new era would be the era of democracy.

Three deputies spoke to the JORDAN TIMES before they knew they would be named ministers. All expressed hopes that the new government will bring change to the country, especially in enhancing respect for human rights and public freedoms.

"Democracy will prevail in the Kingdom," said Dr. al-Nusur. "There will be radical change...and human rights, liberties and freedoms and fighting corruption will be the headlines of the new stage."

Hashim al-Dabbas, now minister of energy and mineral resources, had expressed hope that his 16-member National Action Front would be represented in the government by five deputies instead of the actual four, but said that the front would vote for the government.

Hammad Abu-Jamus, who became minister of social development, anticipated that members of the Democratic Parliamentary Coalition bloc of which he is a member would all eventually become ministers. He expressed hope that Mr. al-Kabariti's new government would bring in positive change in all fields.

"Since he was asked to form a government, we were behind him one hundred per cent," Mr. Abu Jamus said. "Mr. al-Kabariti, a member of the coalition, is highly qualified for the job."

Minister on 'Main Goals' of Jordan's New Government

JN0502212996 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir has said that the tasks of the new government are aimed at implementing the royal letter of designation by making a qualitative move in government performance, highlighting Jordan's cultural role, and tackling developments in the local and Arab arenas.

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particularly Jordan's Arab relations and its post-peace ties with Israel.

In statements to Israeli radio and the BBC, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said that because of Jordan's political openness and the need for a parliament-represented government, the cabinet consisted mainly of parliamentarians, reflecting most of the currents in the Jordanian arena, which are in agreement over the broadlines of the most important internal and external policies. In addition, he said, Prime Minister al-Kabariti is a veteran parliamentarian and of the younger generation.

Regarding the main goals of the new government, the minister said that Jordan's foreign policy is aimed at building close relations with Arab and friendly countries and in building a strong relationship with Israel. He asserted that the government would do its best to implement and give momentum to the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement.

Replying to a question, the minister said: I believe that a new Jordanian ambassador to Israel will be named within the next few weeks.

Regarding the new cabinet's relationship with the Islamic movement, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said that the Islamic movement is part of the effective political current in the Jordanian arena. He pointed out that the government will present its policy statement to the House of Representatives, which will have a say in the statement. He said that since the Islamic movement is represented in the House of Representatives, it will also have a say.

Asked about Jordanian-Palestinian relations, particularly the reported plans to establish federal or confederal relations, he said that this subject is premature and that any future cooperation with the Palestinian neighbor would be left until the Palestinian brothers complete their discussions and negotiations with the Israeli side. He added that after a final solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute is reached and after the two peoples make their free decision, we can talk about any formula. He said that the Jordanian-Palestinian relations are at their best now, that we are all moving on one wagon—the peace wagon—and that coordination between the Jordanian and Palestinian sides is excellent.

Regarding Jordanian-Iraqi relations, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan's policy, which will be highlighted by the policy statement before the House of Representatives, will be very clear in terms of the various aspects of tackling world issues in general, adding that this policy will be very clear.

On Jordanian-Gulf relations, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir pointed out that for some time now there have been efforts to improve Jordanian-Gulf relations. He said these efforts made good progress and hoped the new government would complete this progress.

Jordan's al-Kabariti To Bolster Relations With Gulf States

JN0502214496 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with the Saudi paper AL-JAZIRAH, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has stated he will do what he can to strengthen relations between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Arab Gulf states, particularly with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The prime minister emphasized the close relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia and praised the major role fraternal Saudi Arabia plays.

Al-Kabariti added that his government will work for entrenching these relations and that it will cooperate with the Saudi government and the other Gulf countries on all levels, and will serve the Arab and Islamic nation.

Daily Views Foreign Policy of Jordan's New Prime Minister

JN0502130296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 5 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Lamid K. Andoni; "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti's rapid political rise is attributed mostly to his active and often aggressive performance in promoting Jordan's foreign policies in the post-Gulf war era.

For even though Jordan's major foreign policy shift started with the opening of the Madrid peace conference in 1991, Mr. al-Kabariti, who was appointed as foreign minister in January 1995, was more assertive than any of his predecessors in seeking to redefine the Kingdom's regional role.

The fact that Mr. al-Kabariti, unlike many Jordanian politicians, maintained a cautious position during the Gulf war and never came out in support of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait placed him in a strong position to pursue reconciliation with the Gulf states and the renewal in the post-peace era of the strategic alliance with the U.S.

His designation as prime minister will put to rest speculation that his outspoken advocacy of some of the less popular foreign policies, including support of change in Iraq, was out of tune with the rest of the country.

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As foreign minister, Mr. al-Kabariti maintained a high-profile performance just as some of his colleagues kept their distance from the post-Gulf war policies.

This performance is attributed by analysts to his long association with the palace's political vision and unusual maneuvering style that combines diplomacy with bluntness.

His style, particularly some critical statements against both Syria and Iraq, has provoked counter-criticism by many politicians who were wary that Jordan's new closeness to Israel would lead to estrangement from its Arab neigbours.

But Mr. al-Kabariti was lacing his sharp statements with tactful diplomacy, which is an indication of not only political acumen but also of confidence that he is in tune with the palace at a time when many of his colleagues were reluctant to actively promote Jordan's new policies.

The fact that fellow ministers in the al-Sharif Zayd Bin Shakir Cabinet hesitated in fully endorsing full normalisation with Israel and moves towards reconciliation with Saudi Arabia often at the expense of relations with Iraq singled out Mr. al-Kabariti as the most outspoken defender of the new policies.

While many politicians, especially from the "old guard," found it extremely difficult to depart with ideals that emanated from commitment to pan-Arab nationalism and to the attainment of all Palestinian national rights, Mr. al-Kabariti showed a high level of flexibility and adaptability.

The shift in his attitude towards Jordan's relations with the Palestinians is perhaps the most important indicator of this flexibility. As a junior politician and Parliament member, Mr. al-Kabariti was known to espouse a hard-line "East Bank" attitude whose hallmark was to protect against the potential threat of a Palestinian entity to Jordan.

But as foreign minister he developed a good working relationship with Palestinian leadership with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat and became the first foreign minister to pay an official visit to the autonomous Gaza Strip.

The turning point that "warmed" Mr. al-Kabariti's relationship with Mr. 'Arafat was when the former sought to allay Palestinian fears at the Casablanca meeting on Jerusalem in early 1995 by supporting a resolution that recognised Palestinian sovereignty over the eastern part of the city.

But some analysts argue that Mr. al-Kabariti's major concern, as has always been, is his strong concern about and sensitivity to Jordan's own security. Seen in this light, the good working relationship between Mr. al-Kabariti and Mr. 'Arafat is more a result of the change of the role of the latter from revolutionary politics to political accommodation.

As foreign minister, Mr. al-Kabariti consistently backed His Majesty King Husayn's policy of supporting the Palestinian leadership's option. According to Palestinian officials, he had constantly sought to reassure the PLO chairman that Jordan would not support or encourage his opponents.

In the view of some analysts, Mr. al-Kabariti will continue to pursue Jordan's policy of "neutralising" the Palestinian entity as it seeks to move closer to Saudi Arabia, however.

Mr. al-Kabariti is blamed, by many, for straining Jordan's ties with Syria by making aggressive statement rejecting accusations by Damascus against Jordan for backing attempts to "divide" Iraq.

Those statements were very indicative of the new era in Jordanian policy that refuses to tie Jordan to Syria's position, especially that Damascus was proceeding to reach its own peace agreement with Israel.

The statements on Syria and later on condemning the Bahraini opposition for fomenting trouble on the island state appeared to reflect concern about a potential Syrian and Iranian attempt to influence the Jordanian opposition.

But critics of the statements believed that the position on Syria and the explicit support for the Bahraini Government were more in tune with Israeli and American aims of portraying Iran as the major threat in the region.

Now Mr. al-Kabariti is expected to shift to a less confrontational style as a prime minister, partly to avoid fueling the Jordanian opposition groups' rhetoric but also because his new job as a prime minister would not allow him the same manoeuvrability that he enjoyed as foreign minister.

One of his priorities, well informed analysts say, is to pursue a two-pronged policy that would simultaneously improved ties with Israel and the Palestinian National Authority—in an attempt to strike some kind of balance especially that the Palestinians are wary of Jordan's warm relations with the Jewish state.

As prime minister, he would most probably work to strike a permanent balance between the goals of Jordan's foreign policy and avoiding serious frictions at home.

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Jordan's New Prime Minister Described as 'Master Lobbyist'

JN0502133596 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 5 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The new prime minister, 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, did not make it to the top post by accident. Nor was it an easy ride for him to be where he is today.

His leadership qualities became evident as far back as 1971, when he headed the Jordanian Students Association at the American University of Beirut (AUB). The 22-year-old student of geology was so effective in resisting an overwhelming pro-Nasserite wave at the university that he was finally kidnapped by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in the first political kidnapping in Lebanon. His release was soon secured through His Majesty King Husayn's mediation with the Lebanese power-brokers. The King, who was impressed by this young man's determination to defend the then embattled monarchy, received him at the airport upon his return to Amman.

Mr. al-Kabariti's wife, Fatina, who knew him since childhood, said her husband "always knew what he wanted...and almost always got it."

In describing his personality, she said the man "is very pleasant on the outside, very tough on the inside...he is a very solid person."

His close friends say he is a good listener, and an articulate speaker. His ability to win friends and rally followers earned him the admiration of his friends and foes alike. His perseverance, combined with a keen knowledge of human nature, helped him in his meteoric rise to the top.

A friend of his describes his style; "He sets a seemingly unrealistic goal, then his whole being works in the direction of achieving it. In the process, he recruits followers and supporters at a whim, uses his noted power of persuasion and deftly undermines his baffled detractors. In short, a master lobbyist, a brilliant strategist and a natural politician who knows where his bread is buttered."

Another friend says the man never gives up, and once he achieves a goal, he moves on to another. "There is no limit to his stamina. He simply cannot give up and cannot be cornered. If he is challenged or slighted, he charges like a raging bull, crushing his opponents. This is why he is described as a political bulldozer."

Mr. al-Kabariti says that he has learned a lot from his father. One of the things he told him was: "Do not pull out your gun unless you plan to use it." In other words, know your limitations and do not enter a losing battle.

Mr. al-Kabariti's sense of humour and informal touch is also noted. During a meeting at the Barcelona conference in November last year, which he attended as foreign minister, he drank, by mistake, the glass of water belonging to his Lebanese counterpart Faris Buwayz, who was sitting to his right.

Mr. Buwayz, realising what Mr. al-Kabariti had done, showed a slight sign of protest, only to see the Jordanian foreign minister turn left, pick up the glass of water placed in front of Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, and hand it over to Mr. Buwayz who drank it. Seeing that, Mr. Baraq sent a note to Mr. al-Kabariti, congratulating him for succeeding in launching the first cooperation between Israel and Lebanon on water issues.

Mr. al-Kabariti's political opponents, who fought him tooth and nail, say he is aggressive, sometimes reckless and manipulative and often single-minded. But even those respect him and admire his abilities.

A member of the Muslim brotherhood, who admits he was opposed to Mr. al-Kabariti's peace policies and his aggressive stance vis-a-vis Iraq, says he likes the man as a person. "Abu-Awn is a decent man, not only because he doesn't drink and he doesn't smoke," he says. "He is humble and close to the people... I think he is a good man... even Tujan Faysal, who never praised anybody in her life, thinks he is a good man."

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Daily Sees No 'Guarantees' for Lebanon in Clinton's Remarks

MM0502154596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 4 Feb 96 p 17

[Article by 'Abd-al-Wahhab Badrakhan: "Without Guarantees"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Are U.S. President Bill Clinton's remarks about Lebanon reassuring? Does the French president's warning about "sacrifice" in Lebanon make any difference? The truth of the matter is that, by any interpretation, such talk does no harm, but it does no good either. It is, of course, better than the only superpower's President announcing that, in fact, this sacrifice in Lebanon is conceivable and beyond doubt, because of the repeated violations of and blows to Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, territory, people, presidents, deputies, and employees....

Fortunately, France, the "affectionate mother," is still affectionate enough to muster some courage to raise the issue — Lebanon's fate in the peace deals — with "the universal mother," the United States, and obtain from it a position which, despite its few words, is perhaps more significant than the official spokesmen's chatter and their formulas ready to be marketed anytime, anywhere. Jacques Chirac, who drew the attention of his host Bill Clinton to the "importance" of making sure that Lebanon does not pay the price of peace out of its sovereignty and independence, was no doubt echoing the fears of Lebanese officials, who were wearied and terrified by doubts and unable to share their apprehensions with any internationally effective friend. Perhaps France's annoyance at being kept out of the Middle East peace process and at the United States' exclusive sponsorship of this process is what made it draw attention to what is in store for Lebanon.

In the past, it was still possible to secure U.S. understanding of the Lebanese viewpoint. However, at a time when agreements signed in the White House gardens are sought, that is no longer the case. As far as Washington is concerned, some matters are important, some more important, some less important, and others not important with regard to the current administration's diplomatic "victories." What Israel wants is always more important, whereas what satisfies Syria is important, and, hence, a country such as Lebanon, which was invited to the Madrid conference and is one of the states involved in the peace process, can only be less important or not important. The Lebanese officials were and still are afraid of uttering views in front of the Americans which could cause them a headache.

It is clear that Clinton's words carry a big, dangerous, and particularly elastic "but." There is the principle (Lebanon has not been sacrificed), and there is the conditional "but" (nonsacrifice depends on achieving a reasonable and acceptable settlement between Syria and Israel). Thus, the issue is not resolved, and there is a big difference between sovereignty and independence on paper and in politicians' statements, and sovereignty and independence which are now the victim of the fait accompli. Settlements deal with small states through the fait accompli and not in accordance with principles.

Perhaps the most serious aspect of Clinton's remarks is that, to a large extent and albeit implicitly, they take into account what is actually happening in the field. For him, the two important sides now, Syria and Israel, have made Lebanon an area of conflict for at least 20 years. It is only natural — and this is the case — that these sides agree on the fate of this arena. Then Israel, the more important of the two, indicates to the important side, Syria, its readiness to make "concessions"...in Lebanon. In any case, there is generally a U.S. bias toward any Israeli talk or option.

If real dangers are to befall Lebanon within the framework of the peace process, the issue undoubtedly needs more than a mere press statement, which is easy to evade when the time comes to adhere to it. There is plenty of experience with the United States in this respect, and if the Lebanese are betting that the end of the Middle East conflict will be the real end to their crisis and war, they are getting closer to or further from peace for reasons beyond their control. What is more serious is the fact that they are faced with this situation without guarantees.

Hizballah, Phalangists, Others Reject Lebanon Media Policy

NC0202220496 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Representatives from the Workers League, the Islamic Group, the Phalangist Party, Hizballah, the Union Party, the Communist Party, the Nasirite Popular Organization, the Popular Committees and Leagues, and the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party-the Supreme Council held a meeting at the Workers League's headquarters this afternoon. Deputies Zahir al-Khatib and Zuhayr al-'Ubaydi attended the meeting. The conferees discussed the news media and issued a statement in which they said that the government policy on public liberties is essentially based on oppression and suppression. There is evidence that the government is banning gatherings and demonstrations, violating deputies' immunity, and ignoring the recommendations of the Chamber of Deputies. Moreover, the gov-

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ernment is now trying to monopolize media and make them one-dimensional through the issuance of a technical report that serves the government's policy and its desire to still the voices of the opposition.

The statement calls for the establishment of an impartial committee of experts to determine the technical aspects of the media issue so that the right to Lebanese airwaves will not be forfeited. The parties stressed support for news media and for media personnel in their moves, and they urged the Lebanese people to work to safeguard freedoms and confront this oppressive policy. The parties decided to meet again in the Islamic Group's office at 1300 on Thursday [8 February] to continue consultations and discuss practical steps to support the media and defend its freedom.

General Labor Union President Ilyas Abu-Rizq called on the coordination committee for trade unions to hold an emergency meeting at 1000 tomorrow to discuss civil liberties, the violation of the Constitution, and labor demands.

Lebanon's Wakim Says Resignation Serious, Not Theatrical

NC0502182696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Najah Wakim has stressed that his resignation is serious and not theatrical. He denied that the resignation was tendered for election purposes. Wakim accused the prime minister of giving bribes for election purposes.

Beirut Initials Loan Agreement With Arab Development Fund

NC0302124096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A loan agreement was initialed between the Lebanese Government and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development today. The loan will be used for funding the qualifying of administrative employees and upgrading administrative management. The agreement was initialed for Lebanon by Nabil al-Jisr, the chairman of the Council for Reconstruction and Development, and for the Fund by Dr. Khalifah 'Ali Daw, financial adviser and head of its delegation. Anwar al-Khalil, minister of state for administrative reform affairs, attended the signing ceremony. Minister al-Khalil said the 36-million Kuwaiti dinar loan will be repaid over 26 years with a five-year grace period. [passage omitted]

Israeli Shelling, Islamic Resistance Attack Reported in Lebanon

NC0302082396 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces continued their aggression against the liberated areas near the occupied border strip yesterday. Israeli units in Hula and al-Qantarah raked the outskirts of the villages of Frun, al-Ghanduriyah, Tulin, and Wadi al-Hajar with heavy machine guns. Enemy posts earlier raked the vicinity of Bra'shit, Haddatha, and Sribbin. These attacks were accompanied by hostile helicopter flights over the villages near the border strip in the central and western sectors. The outskirts of Habbush, the Habbush River basin, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, and the southern quarter of 'Arab Salim came under military barrage from the Israeli posts opposite these areas. Phosphoric bombs and 120-mm rounds fell in these areas and columns of smoke were seen billowing over the area. The Israelis also directed machine-gun fire at these areas.

The Israeli naval blockade of Lebanese fishermen in the south continues. Israeli gunboats yesterday directed machine-gun fire at a fishing boat to prevent it from sailing.

The Islamic Resistance released a statement saying a sniper unit in the Islamic Resistance fired at a Lahdist [South Lebanese Army] Agent in al-Suwyada', killing him instantly.

Israelis Detain 3 Lebanese Fishermen; Overflights Reported

NC0402102896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1000 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Continuing their piracy of the southern coast and fishing ports, Israeli naval forces detained three fishermen this morning. They are Husayn al-Zayn, Wisam al-Samra, and 'Isam al-Samra. The Israelis detained them while they were fishing on their boat off the al-Rashidiyah coast, south of Tyre.

Another Israeli navy patrol seized a ship loaded with goods arriving from Europe. During the three-hour seizure, the Israelis searched the ship and interrogated the crew before releasing the ship.

Israeli military aircraft overflew al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah at about 1100 today

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Israeli Navy Releases Lebanese Fishermen

NC0502211596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today Israeli gunboats opened machine gun fire at fishermen's boats off the coast of Sidon, forcing the fishermen to return to the shore.

The Israeli enemy's navy has released near the Ra's al-Bayyadah coast the fishing boat which it seized yesterday near Tyre. Three fishermen were on board. They are Wisam and 'Isam al-Samra and Zayn Istambuli.

2 Israelis, 1 SLA Soldier Wounded in Lebanon Bombardment

NC0402154896 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two Israeli soldiers and a South Lebanese Army [SLA] soldier were slightly injured when an Israeli position in the eastern sector came under artillery bombardment at noon today. The Israeli and SLA troops returned the fire.

Lebanese 'Resistance' Attacks Detailed

NC0502073896 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During the blessed month of Ramadan, on the anniversary of the birth of Imam al-Hasan, may God's peace be with him, and on the anniversary of the triumphant and sanctified Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Resistance carried out operations against the occupation forces and their Agent militia at 0700 today.

Mujahidin from the Martyr Ahmad 'Asayli Group ambushed a Lahd militia [South Lebanese Army] patrol at the al-Hamra' crossing, firing a hail of machine-gun and rocket fire on it and causing casualties among its members.

The Martyr Husayn Fadlallah Shalhub Ishaq Group attacked the al-Bayyadah position with machine-gun and rocket fire, inflicting verified casualties.

The Martyr 'Ali Hasan Bilal Group attacked a tank at the al-Hardun post.

The Islamic Resistance operations this morning came in retaliation for continuing Zionist assaults on villages, particularly al-Mansurah. Some 30 shells fell on the village and two citizens, 'Amirah Khashshab and Mirvat Khashshab, were wounded and transferred to Najm Hospital. [passage omitted]

Elsewhere, the commanders of Zionist gunboats released three fishermen kidnapped 12 hours earlier after being seized from their boat, which was well inside Lebanese territorial waters. According to security sources, the three young fishermen have now returned to Tyre Port on board their own boat.

A Zionist gunboat fired warning shots at eight fishing boats off the al-Rashidiyah coast yesterday before abducting the three fishermen.

We have a fresh report from our newsdesk: Our correspondent in the south reported a short time ago that the Israelis have resumed shelling of the western sector of the south. He said 'Amirah Khashshab, hurt earlier, had been martyred. [passage omitted]

Southern Areas Shelled; Israeli Aircraft Overfly Beirut

NC0502211796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli acts of aggression against peaceful villages and towns in the south and Western al-Biqa' have resumed.

This evening, the Jabal al-Dahr heights, the woods of al-Qatranah, and the al-Surayrah vicinity came under concentrated artillery bombardment originating from Israeli occupation forces posts inside the occupied border strip.

This evening, Israeli enemy warplanes flew over the south and over Beirut, drawing fire from Lebanese army antiaircraft guns.

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Christopher Arrives in Damascus 6 Feb

JN0602102396 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1000 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 6 Feb (SANA) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Damascus at 1115 [0915 GMT] today on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', senior Foreign Ministry officials, Syrian Ambassador in Washington Walid al-Mu'allim, U.S. Ambassador in Damascus Christopher Ross, and the U.S. Embassy staff.

Al-Asad Receives Christopher, U.S. Delegation in Damascus

JN0602124996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Hafiz al-Asad received the following officials at the People's Palace at 1130 [0930 GMT] today: Warren Christopher, U.S. Secretary of State; Dennis Ross, U.S coordinator for the Middle East peace process; Christopher Ross, U.S. Ambassador in Damascus; and Mark Parris, special assistant to U.S. President Bill Clinton and director of the Near East and South Asia Affairs at the U.S. National Security Council.

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' attended the meeting, as did Walid al-Mu'allim, Dr. Mikhail Wahbih, and Dr. Riyad al-Dawudi, members of the Syrian delegation to the peace talks. [passage omitted]

Syrian Media Views Israeli Positions, Christopher's Visit

JN0602095996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0555 GMT 6 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, the newspaper AL-BA'TH discusses the requirements of peace. The paper says: It is regrettable that the high hopes for tangible progress in the peace process are now facing a situation of becoming overwhelmed by the lack of optimism about the possibility of such progress.

AL-BA'TH adds that the peace process is again being subjected to the traditional Israeli maneuvers that have become familiar since the Madrid conference. These maneuvers are led by the refusal to make a frank and clear commitment to the UN resolutions and those of the international legitimacy, as well as the rejection of balanced [al-mutawazinah] and parallel [al-mutawaziyah] security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June 1967 borders. These arrangements alone can guarantee achieving the desired just peace that will give everyone his full due.

AL-BA'TH asserts that Israel has fabricated the crisis of holding early elections in May. This could halt all the efforts designed to push the negotiations on the Syrian track. The paper points out that it is possible to view Christopher's current tour of the region as an attempt by the U.S. cosponsor to achieve the required progress in anticipation of the fact that the fever of the Israeli elections, and later the U.S. elections, will dominate the political scenes in Israel and the United States.

AL-BA'TH says that progress will always be contingent on a drastic change in the Israeli position, in terms of the way and the nature of Israel's approach to the peace process. It is time for Israel to realize that peace is an inevitability that it cannot evade forever and that, regardless of the party in power in Israel, Labor or Likud, and regardless of the attitudes of Israeli voters and settlers, the time must come when Israel acknowledges this inevitability.

Concluding its editorial, AL-BA'TH says: If Peres continues to maintain that peace with Syria is more important to him than elections, he should take a position that translates this remark into reality before he loses a historic opportunity to truly be a man of peace.

In its editorial today, the newspaper TISHRIN asserts that peace needs a pooling the efforts of all the concerned parties. The paper points out that we have thus far not sensed the seriousness required of the Israeli Government to achieve an actual breakthrough on the Syrian track.

TISHRIN discusses the Israeli maneuvers accompanying the peace process such as entering the whirlpool of Israeli elections. The paper asserts that these maneuvers aim to evade a substantive issue: an announcement by the Israeli Government that it is ready to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 lines. This announcement has not been made so far.

TISHRIN adds: In addition, an important proposal by Shim'on Peres has been obstructed. Peres said that any solution should secure the needs of all parties. The paper adds: This matter was clear during the discussions on security arrangements. Israel insisted on setting impossible conditions that only guarantee its own security, undermine Syrian sovereignty, and grant strategic privileges to Israel at the expense of Syria. This is unacceptable.

TISHRIN continues: The adherence by Shim'on Peres' government to intransigent positions has drawn the Maryland negotiations into a whirlpool of labyrinths, complicated the opportunities for their success, and

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placed the entire Syrian track before a serious impasse. The positive Israeli assessment of the Maryland talks does not reflect reality. This is because the gap is still vast, and there has been no agreement on any of the elements for a just and comprehensive peace.

TISHRIN asserts that negotiations are not an objective in themselves, but a means to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. The Peres government's desire to continue negotiations should be coupled with an actual readiness to provide the requirements of such peace, led by full Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines in the Golan and withdrawal from southern Lebanon, as well as accepting equal [mutasawiyah] and symmetrical [mutanazirah] security arrangements that do not undermine the sovereignty or the commitment to the international resolutions.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: The Peres government's continued evasion of these requirements means a retreat from the opportunities for a just and comprehensive settlement. We hope that Christopher's current tour will prompt the Israeli Government to take practical and constructive positions that will help circumvent the current impasse of the peace process and increase the opportunity to achieve a just and real peace that will return the rights and provide security and stability to all.

Damascus Radio Terms Results of Wye Talks 'Disappointing'

JN0202155596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen, the Israelis' exaggerated security fears deepened the gap between the Syrian and Israeli stands at the Maryland talks. Security arrangements consumed a considerable part of these talks, but the results were disappointing because the Israeli side did not abide by the principle of security equitability [takafu'] following a withdrawal from the Golan. It also dealt with the talks as if they were not related to an agreement to move the region from a state of war to one of stable and firm peace.

The fact is that the Israeli stand, which has been characterized by exaggeration and intransigence, cannot be separated from the calls for early elections made in Tel Aviv under the pretext that elections are more important than peace and that the internal situation, which favors the Labor Party, should be exploited by an election campaign without delay.

Contrary to what the Israeli prime minister said about the priority of peace and peace being more important than election gains, some Israeli officials are leading a large-scale campaign for early elections. They do not even hesitate to cast doubts on the Maryland talks. This prompted some ministers, such as Environment Minister Yosi Sarid, to attack those officials and openly accuse them of obstructing the Syrian-Israeli talks. Sarid said: These pessimistic statements express a desire to obstruct the Maryland talks.

It is known that Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq meant to belittle the importance of peace with Syria and Lebanon, in fact with all Arabs. His statements smack of sarcastic provocation at a time when the United States is reiterating the importance of peace with Syria and Lebanon and the need to achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It also announced, through Secretary Christopher, its resolve to double its efforts to remove the obstacles based on its belief that without Syria and Lebanon, peace cannot be complete and stability will not be achieved in the region.

Hence the importance of Secretary Christopher's tour, which begins on Sunday [4 February]. The world is unanimous that Syria did everything it could to facilitate the international efforts when it agreed on the requirements for the peace process, particularly ordinary ['adiyah] relations and equitable [mutakafi'ah] arrangements, provided that Israel withdraws fully to the 4 June 1967 border and implements the Security Council resolutions. This requires the United States to use its influence with Israel to keep it from erecting obstacles and setting impossible conditions that Syria cannot accept.

The exaggeration of security fears turned resulted in premeditated obstacles to the peace process. The whole world believes that a just and comprehensive peace is a real guarantee for security and that any subsequent arrangements will strengthen peace, but they are not an alternative to it. So far, Israel has dealt with the Maryland talks as if the security arrangements, not peace, are the basis.

Because Syria is committed to the peace process and its bases and because it has spared no effort in this regard, no one should believe he can push Syria to take steps that contradict its convictions or drag it into inequitable deals.

Syria considers Israel's full withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 border the basis of any possible agreement. Syria cannot agree to any inequitable arrangements that undermine its security and tip the balance in the region.

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Syrian Commentary Says Israel Still Obstructing Peace Efforts

JN0302174396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: When the Syrian-Israeli Maryland talks resumed with U.S. participation, observers as well as the U.S. sponsor tried to give an optimistic impression. Syria, meanwhile, expressed guarded optimism, because of the nature of challenges facing the Syrian-Israeli and the Lebanese-Israeli peace tracks, and also because of the hard work and new positions that would be required if there was determination to achieve real, tangible progress.

When the talks resumed, it became clear that their success would depend on what Israel offered at the negotiating table and also on how far Israel's proposals meet the resolutions of international legitimacy, the bases of the peace process, and the objective requirements of security and stability.

Although Israel aborted the peace efforts made over past years, progress remains possible if Israel translates its optimistic statements into deeds, and if it deals with the peace requirements seriously. This, in itself, shows Syria's goodwill, particularly since it dealt positively with U.S. efforts and Israel's optimistic tone. Syria also asserted that it would work to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that would return all land and rights to their owners, guarantee everybody's interests and security, and bring about a new era of security and stability in the region.

What Israel actually offered at the negotiating table caused a setback to the tone of optimism. Israel's ideas surfaced more clearly, revealing a mentality that refuses to abandon obstacles and attempts to create more mines and barbed wire for the negotiations.

It is no secret to observers that the optimistic start of the talks was due to Israel's proposals and to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' campaign that peace was more important than elections. However, ensuing statements and positions by Israeli officials and negotiators did not conceal the dimensions of that campaign, that is, preferring the results of the elections to peace, and allowing the hardliners, who aim at holding on to the land while encroaching on others' rights and sovereignty, to strengthen their stand.

As a result, the atmosphere of the Syrian-Israeli track was filled with pessimism. Undoubtedly, the Maryland talks provided a real opportunity to fill the gaps, remove obstacles, and exert further efforts to achieve tangible progress. However, Israel did not deal with that opportunity out of a desire to achieve peace, and offered everything it knew Syria would reject. Syria, which adheres to international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace, bases its demands on two conditions: justice and comprehensiveness. Syria is asking for its land and rights, which cannot be subject to bargaining.

It is natural for us to reiterate that Syria offered all it could to achieve real progress. Israel, as well as others, know that progress is possible only if Israel decides to meet the peace requirements, foremost of which are a total withdrawal and accepting mutual commitments regarding the security arrangements, which can be made only in light of the principles of equality [tasawi] and equitability [takafu'] on both sides of the 4 June 1967 line. Will U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is expected to visit the region in the near future, persuade Israel to take the right step toward a just and comprehensive peace, which will preserve the true interests of everybody in the region and the world at large.

Damascus Radio Seeks Israeli Answers on Peace Requirements

JN0402153096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1236 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Mr. Warren Christopher will arrive in the region tomorrow on a new tour and as part of new efforts which will be added to the U.S. Administration's persistent efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. This is a U.S. top priority, as has frequently been announced by Christopher.

Christopher's new tour will add to the convictions of the world public opinion a new belief related to the substance and developments of the peace process in two aspects: First, Syria is determined to attain a just and comprehensive peace, and it has always provided successive opportunities and possibilities to organize the dialogue within the framework specified by international legitimacy and its resolutions and by the Madrid conference which was based on all these resolutions and on the U.S. guarantees as the United States is the major cosponsor of the peace process.

Second, Israel is still pursuing the policy of procrastination and hesitation, and even contradiction on many occasions, whether this contradiction was planned by the Israelis or a reflection of a situation they are living, particularly after Yitzhaq Rabin's murder and Peres' assumption of power and Baraq's appointment as foreign minister.

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Considering the Israeli statements made during the talks and in corridors of the Maryland talks, an inevitable reality can be inferred: What the new, yet old, Israeli statements suggested has directly affected the progress and results of talks. This was reflected in the Israeli delegation's performance, which was characterized by reluctance and procrastination. The Israeli negotiator tried to evade certain things, so he filled the atmosphere with security issues and details in an attempt to divert the talks from their substance and evade the requirements of this substance.

For this reason, the recent Maryland talks did not achieve any noticeable progress despite the fact that they provided Secretary Christopher with a detailed database on the position, extent of positiveness, and responsibility of each party. The Maryland talks shed more light on the situation and on the major requirements Israel is evading while citing various pretexts which are fabricated by the Israeli officials as needed.

If Secretary Christopher's coming tour is to achieve tangible results, as he promised the journalists in previous statements, his first leg must be Israel. This is because all the questions posed need Israeli answers without which no progress can be made. These answers must be led by the Israeli position on full withdrawal from the occupied territories to the 4 June 1967 borders, and the establishment of an equitable [mutakafi'ah], parallel [mutawaziyah], and equal [mutasawiyah] security system on both sides.

Can progress be achieved if the security of one party is at the expense of the other party or if such a security undermines the other party's sovereignty? This was expressed by U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to Damascus. He asserted that progress is impossible to achieve in this way.

Damascus Radio Calls Israeli Early Elections 'Extortion Maneuver'

JN0502142596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is not enough for the talks on the Syrian-Israeli track to continue so that people can say these talks are showing positive signs. It is also not enough to inject a stimulant into the talks between this or that round in order to become convinced that peace is imminent. And it is not enough to say that the lack of real progress toward peace is due to gaps and obstacles that prevent any rapprochement between the negotiating parties. It might have been possible to accept these excuses if there had been no U.S. initiative that considered the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for a just and comprehensive solution in the region.

The Madrid Conference was convened in late 1991 on the basis of this initiative, which emphasized the land-for-peace formula. But has the principle been implemented since then? Syria has said that peace is its strategic option and that it seeks to total peace in exchange for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. The United States, which proposed the initiative, is continuing its efforts and underscoring its commitment to help achieve peace. It also recognizes that Syria is serious about the peace process. Only Israel is placing obstacles on the path of peace. There is countless evidence to prove this fact. Israel conditionally accepted the Madrid Conference. It gave priority to its security demands over the elements of peace. It sometimes spoke about a withdrawal from the Golan Heights and about a limited or partial withdrawal from the Golan Heights at other times. It then spoke about a link between the depth of peace and the depth of withdrawal.

This evasive Israeli position means only one thing: avoiding compliance with UN Security Council 242, in terms of the inadmissibility of acquiring territory through war and the return of the belligerent forces to the borders that existed before 5 June 1967, which means before the start of hostilities.

Can one explain the Israeli position in any way other than an attempt to foil the U.S. initiative and UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. This fact was confirmed at the Maryland talks. Israel wants to make as many gains as possible under the pretext of security. It wants to establish ground warning stations. It wants to impose an economic hegemony under the pretext of normalization. It wants to hold onto territory under the pretext of the depth of peace. In short, it wants to achieve through negotiations what it failed to achieve by force in terms of political, military, and economic results that can be summed up by one word — hegemony — after imposing a surrender on the party negotiating with it. When it fails to do so, it places obstacles and fabricates crises to evade the requirements of the just and comprehensive peace that will end its occupation and will not allow it to make any security, geographic, or economic gains at the expense of the other party.

Calling for early elections is the most recent Israeli extortion maneuver and has been carried out at the time when Warren Christopher is starting his 17th tour in the region in an effort to keep the door of the peace process open on the Syrian track. We say call this is maneuver because many of the statements made by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres — that peace is more important

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to him than elections, that peace is approaching despite the gaps, and that he understands the needs of the other party — vanish into thin air and are not in line with what has been proposed and is being proposed at the negotiating table.

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Afghanistan

U.S. Delegation Visiting Afghanistan Promises Cooperation

LD0502190896 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, member of the Higher State Council of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, this morning met Mr. Holzman, [visiting] U.S. deputy chief of mission in Islamabad. BAKHTAR has reported that during the meeting talks were held on issues of mutual interest to the two countries and the [U.S.] delegation promised to cooperate with Afghanistan. The meeting was attended by the esteemed Mas'ud Khalili, Afghan ambassador and representative extraordinary to India, and the esteemed Dr. Abdollah, Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman.

According to another report, Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i, minister of state for foreign affairs, today met Holzman in his office and held talks with him on matters of interest.

The delegation, which arrived in the country this morning, left for Islamabad after meeting and holding talks with the Afghan authorities.

UN's Mestiri Discusses Talks With Afghan Taleban

LD0302112396 Tehran IRNA in English 0958 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Feb. 3, IRNA — U.N. special envoy to Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri, who arrived here on January 12 on his sixth round of peace negotiations, returned to Islamabad following talks with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and leaders of the Taleban shura.

Mestiri's talks with Rabbani and other Afghan leaders focused on the power transfer mechanism in the war-torn country, the establishment of a neutral security force and the demilitarization of Kabul.

Reports from the Office of the Secretary General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP) said Mestiri's visit to Afghanistan and his subsequent discussions with the Taleban were fruitful.

During the course of consultations with the Taleban, it was reported that the U.N. envoy underlined the need for a permanent cease-fire and avoiding the outbreak of fresh hostilities.

Reiterating the call on Afghan groups to resolve their differences peacefully, he urged the various Afghan factions to sit and discuss ways for peaceful transfer of power, stressing the U.N. was fully prepared to assist in this process.

Mestiri reportedly also plans to meet with the chief of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam.

Afghan Weekly Discredits U.S. Sanctions, Policies Against Iran

LD0402225896 Tehran IRNA in English 2200 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb 4 (IRNA) — The Afghan Jam'iyat-e Eslami [Islamic Society] led by President Borhanoddin Rabbani, here today condemned the U.S. conspiracies against the Islamic Republic of Iran, assessing such a decision taken by the U.S. Congress as outrageous and hostile.

The U.S. Congress, under the influence of Newt Gingrich, had allocated a 20-million dollar budget for the subversive activities against the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In the latest issue of MOJAHED, the Jam'iyat-e Eslami weekly also wrote that by adopting such nefarious policies, the United States was trying to isolate independent countries like Iran and other nations due to the fact that these countries follow independent policies which run against U.S. interests.

The weekly indicated the United States has faced an utter defeat in trying to formulate such designs as preventing Russia, China and other countries from setting up closer ties with Iran, imposing economic sanctions against Iran and trying to get other countries to follow the suit.

MOJAHED stated that U.S. interference in the internal affairs of other nations proves beyond all doubt how it interprets the human rights practices and international amnesty.

Also calling Iran a powerful country which would be able to lead a global resistance against the U.S. expansionist policy, the weekly concluded that the sanctioning of a budget by the U.S. Congress for carrying out undercover activities in Iran will have no effect whatsoever.

In fact the allocation of such a budget is based upon the policy of trying to get Iran to contain itself in matters related to so- called Middle East peace process, added the weekly.

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UN's Barber Holds Talks With Afghanistan's Lafra'i, Says Aid Insufficient

LD0602104596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i, minister of state for foreign affairs, met today with Martin Barber, the UN coordinator for humanitarian aid for Afghanistan. BAKHTAR reports that Martin Barber said that the purpose of his remarks about food shortage in Afghanistan was to secure international aid. There was no bad intention in his remarks when he said a few days ago that food stocks in Kabul would run out in two weeks' time. He said that the food aid provided by the United Nations and World Food Program is definitely not sufficient and he promised to try to secure international aid for the people of Afghanistan, especially the people of Kabul. During the meeting a number of other issues were discussed and views were exchanged. The heads of UNHCR and World Food Program were also present during the meeting.

Red Cross Airlift To Kabul Underway

LD0302154196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first plane carrying food aid from the International Red Cross arrived in Kabul today. BAKHTAR reported that the plane brought 20 tonnes of food and medicine under the IRC's emergency aid program. An IRC source in Kabul said: These goods will be distributed to the maimed, widows, and needy people.

The emergency aid program, consisting of 1,000 tonnes of goods, will be airlifted into Kabul daily by three IRC planes.

Russia Begins 'Gravy Train' to Afghan Warlords

MS0502095496 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 25 Jan 96 p 10

[Report by Ahmed Rashid: "Russians Return to Afghanistan as Civil War Worsens"]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Russian military technicians have returned to Afghanistan six years after the Soviet army withdrew from Kabul.

The civil war, which has claimed 100,000 lives, is worsening as Afghan warlords prepare for major attacks in March. Afghanistan's neighbours, including Iran and Russia, are pouring in arms to their proxies in the country.

"The Afghan conflict has become internationalised as never before. The stakes have gone up with Iran and Russia's involvement," said a senior diplomat in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad. "A gravy train has begun for the first time since 1992 and no Afghan warlord can resist it." [passage omitted]

Diplomats and intelligence officials said 10 Russian and 30 Indian technicians are working to update Bagram airport, 40 miles from Kabul.

Four Russian Illushyin 76 transport aircraft arrive every day from Tajikistan, Russia and Ukraine with Russian arms, ammunition fuel and Afghan currency printed in Moscow for the beleaguered Kabul regime. In Takhar province, the Russians have built a bridge over the Amu Darya river which divides Central Asia from Afghanistan allowing Russian arms convoys to reach Kabul.

U.S. satellite pictures show that the Russians are also building an airport at Taleqan, which is being developed as a strategic base for Mas'ud if he is forced out of Kabul. "The Russians are back in a big way and now have their first land bridge into Afghanistan since they left the country in 1989," said a diplomat.

Afghan Radio Refutes Pakistani Press Reports About 'Apology'

LD0502210396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In its letters to Pakistan, the Islamic State of Afghanistan has expressed hope for good relations with that country. The letters, copies of which were given to BAKHTAR, speak of the goodwill of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in connection with entertaining good relations with Pakistan. In the letters, which have been sent to the Pakistani prime minister and foreign minister by the Afghan president and foreign ministry, emphasis has been laid on the consolidation of relations. The Pakistani press has launched a campaign alleging that the Afghan Government has formally apologized for the incident in the Pakistan embassy. This allegation is completely contrary to the text of the letters. The letters only said that Kabul residents, angered by the events in the southwest of the country, were solely responsible for the incident. The Islamic State has never agreed to pay compensation [word indistinct]. The letters have also been made available to other news agencies working in Kabul.

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Russian Aircrew in Afghan Taleban Hands for 6 Months

LD0202162896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1450 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By Nikolay Sorokin]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] KAZAN, Feb 2 (Itar-Tass) — February 2 marks six months of captivity for the Russian seven-member air crew in Qandahar, Afghanistan. [passage omitted]

However, there are signs that the Taleban will release the airmen soon, Tatarstan's President Mintimer Shaimiyev told Itar-Tass on Friday.

"There is full hope that the pilots will be freed in the nearest future. Unfortunately, the Taleban have been constantly changing terms. As soon as we meet some (terms) they come up with new ones," Shaimiyev said.

Hekmatyar Radio: Mas'ud Men Expelled From Afghan Guard

LD0502150096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Members of the Shura-ye Nezar [Supervisory Council] have been expelled from the presidential guard of the Kabul administration. Reports reaching Radio Message of Freedom say that armed men under the command of Toryalay and Gada, both commanders of the Shura-ye Nezar, were recently expelled from the presidential guard. They were accused of playing a major role in a blaze that occurred in the Arg [presidential palace] some time ago. Both commanders are very close to Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, the leader of the Shura-ye Nezar.

Taleban, Afghan Government Forces Continue Artillery Exchanges

LD0502143496 Tehran IRNA in English 1336 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb. 5, IRNA — Exchange of heavy fire between the Taleban group and Afghan Government troops continued through the Sunday night for the second consecutive nights, said a source in the Afghan Foreign Ministry on Monday morning. The source, without referring to the possible casualties, said the two sides pounded each other's positions with artillery inflicting heavy damage in Chahar Asiab, Maydan Shahr and Rish Khvor regions.

According to another report, government forces have halted approach of the Taleban group towards Palang I and Palang II heights, southwest of Kabul.

While some reports indicate that the Taleban group is getting prepared for an expanded offensive towards Kabul, a commander of government forces said the group is not in a position to launch any succesful operation against government positions.

Taleban Rocket Attack Injures 2 Civilians in Afghanistan

LD0502174396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [words indistinct] BAKHTAR has reported that the rockets were fired from the south by the Taleban today. As a result, two Kabul residents were injured. One of the rockets hit an apartment block in the Microrayon area in Kabul.

India

Indian Television Details Steps To Boost Uranium Production

BK0502090896 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The production of uranium in the country is being increased to meet the growing demand for nuclear power in the country. Our Patna correspondent has more details:

[Begin correspondent Sudhanshu Ranjan recording] For this, the Jaduguda-based mill of Uranium Corporation of India is being expanded from its present capacity of treat 1,350 tons of uranium ore per day to 2,100 tons per day. This expansion has been necessitated to treat additional ore of about 1,000 tons per day from the recently commissioned Narwa Pahar mine.

With the depletion of other sources of energy, focus is now shifted to uranium, which is one of the most widespread minerals present in the earth's crust. The average concentration of uranium varies from 3 PPM [parts per million] in granite rock to .013 PPM in ultra basic rock formation. In the 160-km-long, uranium-copper belt of South Singhbhum in Bihar, the concentration of uranium on an average is around 50 PPM, and sometimes it is even about 1,000 PPM. That's why all the three mines of uranium corporation are located in this area only.

The ore extracted from these mines is sent to mill where it undergoes a cumbersome process of crushing, grinding, leeching, compression, clarification, [word indistinct], and finally precipitation. The final product is magnesium [word indistinct] containing about 70 percent U-308, commonly known as yellow cake. This yellow cake is sent to Nuclear Fuel Complex, Hyderabad, for

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further processing before being sent to atomic power reactors. [end recording]

Indian Writer Says U.S. To 'Buy' Pakistan's Nuclear Restraint

BK0502141096 Madras THE HINDU in English 5 Feb 96 p 9

[Article by C. Raja Mohan: "Can the U.S. Buy Pakistan's Nuclear Restraint?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The unannounced visit to Islamabad by a top White House official last week may signal an American decision to buy nuclear and missile restraint from Pakistan and isolate India on global and regional arms control issues. It may have the potential to complete the current American tilt towards Islamabad and deepen the strategic consensus between the United States and Pakistan.

Mr. Sandy Berger, the Deputy National Security Advisor to the U.S. President, Mr. Clinton, has travelled to Pakistan late last week for intensive high level consultations in the Pakistani capital. Mr. Berger had talks with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, and the President, Mr. Farooq Leghari.

Mr. Berger has apparently urged the leadership of Pakistan not to define its position on the nuclear and missile issues in terms of what India does. The United States would like Pakistan to support the quick conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] currently being negotiated at Geneva and not join India in demanding a linkage to global abolition of nuclear weapons as a precondition for the implementation of the treaty.

At the CTBT talks that reconvened recently in Geneva, the Pakistani representative Mr. Munir Akram had criticised India for its alleged plans to conduct a nuclear test, but broadly supported the Indian position of linking CTBT to disarmament commitments from the nuclear weapon powers. The Clinton administration is concerned that disarmament demands of the type being articulated by India and Pakistan could wreck the prospects for an early CTBT, which the United States wants to finalise by this summer.

In their reaction to the recent Indian Prithvi test, a spokesman of the U.S. State Department called it a "mistake", he added, however, that the Indian test should not be seen as an excuse for Pakistan to unveil the M-11 missiles it has acquired from China or embark on its own missile development. The current American law demands that the United States impose trade sanctions against both China and Pakistan, if Islamabad reveals the presence of Chinese missiles on its soil. The Clinton administration has been determined to avoid this outcome.

White House officials at the level of Mr. Berger do not undertake foreign trips without a major purpose. The last time such a senior official of the American National Security Council travelled to the subcontinent was in May 1990, when the deputy national security advisor in the Bush administration, Mr. Robert Gates, visited Islamabad and New Delhi to defuse the military tensions in Kashmir between Pakistan and India.

Mr. Berger's decision not to include New Delhi in his travel plans suggests that Washington may have come to the conclusion that it may not be possible to persuade India to support the CTBT in the present form and dissuade it from further development of its nuclear and missile programmes. At the Geneva talks on CTBT, India and the United States have now locked themselves into positions that appear increasingly irreconcilable.

Despite the American demands on India to freeze its missile programme, India has gone ahead with its Prithvi test. The Clinton administration may not have been fully reassured by the Indian denials on the plans to conduct a second nuclear test. The hardening national security debate in India on the eve of the impending general elections may also have convinced the United States that arms control dialogue with India at this stage may be futile.

Although a compromise with India may emerge in future, the Clinton administration appears to be preparing itself for a possible confrontation with India on arms control issues. The key to winning such a confrontation, the White House may have calculated, lies in Islamabad. The Clinton administration is aware that Pakistan is under domestic public pressure to make visible advances in its own nuclear and missile programmes. Pakistani nuclear and missile restraint may be critical in the American efforts to isolate India in the global arms control fora and set up a credible international punitive regime against India's nuclear and missile programmes. An unrestrained Pakistani policy on nuclear weapons and missiles may also undercut the American effort to promote Pakistan as a "front line" state that serves American interests in the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and Afghanistan, in particular the containment of Iran.

If the United States is keen on buying Pakistani restraint on the nuclear and missile issues, how high a price is Mr. Berger prepared to pay? That may well have been the heart of the recent high-level dialogue between Mr. Berger and the Pakistani leadership. The structure of such a bargain is not difficult to visualise. Pakistan's

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demands could include the following: the further dilution of the Pressler sanctions — the current non- proliferation law against Pakistan — by going well beyond the one- time exception provided in the recent Brown Amendment; the return to a full arms supply relationship; increased international pressure on India's nuclear and missile programmes; and greater American commitment to back Islamabad in its disputes with India, particularly on Kashmir.

The United States on the other hand could want the following from Pakistan: strong support for the CTBT; delinking Pakistani nuclear posture from that of India; and finally great.. Pakistani willingness to promote American strategic objectives in the region. It will be premature to predict the possible outcome of the current bargaining between Washington and Islamabad. But India needs to be fully prepared to face up to the return of a strategic consensus between the United States and Pakistan.

Industrial Use of Indian Nuclear Technology Foreseen

BK0402104196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Department of Atomic Energy is making efforts to provide benefits of indigenous nuclear technology to Indian industry and consumers. The Bhabha Atomic Research Center director, Mr. A.N. Prasad, told PTI that nuclear technology can now be used on a cost-effective manner in fields like medicine, industry, and agriculture. It has so far been used mainly in the country's atomic reactors.

Indian INSAT-2C Satellite To Become Operational 'Next Week'

BK0402104096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The country's most advanced and first exclusive communications satellite, INSAT-2C, is to be declared operational next week. The satellite, launched by the French Ariane rocket last December, has undergone all tests. The director of the Master Control Facility at Hasan, Dr. R. Rangarajan, told PTI this morning that the INSAT Coordination Committee is expected to meet by the middle of this month to finalize the allocation of the transponders to various user agencies.

India: 'Pakistani Mercenaries' Among 16 Killed in Kashmir

BK0502150996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, 16 persons, including eight militants, were killed during the last 24 hours. According to official sources, three Pakistani mercenaries were killed when they sneaked into the Indian territory. Three militants were killed by a rival group in Srinagar and two militants by the security forces. Five militants were arrested and three militants surrendered to the security forces. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered.

Indian Coast Guard Arrests 24 Pakistanis, Seizes Trawlers

BK0202135196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Coast Guard has apprehended 24 Pakistani nationals off the Gujarat coast. Their fishing trawlers were also seized after a hot chase 35 nautical miles inside the international maritime boundary line yesterday. All the trawlers, along with the crew, have been taken to Porbander for legal action.

India's Chavan Says Situation Conducive for Elections in Kashmir

BK0502050396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister and the Jammu and Kashmir governor have held separate discussions with the prime minister on holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Yesterday's discussions were a follow-up of two days of consultations earlier between the home minister and leaders of various political parties on the subject. After the consultations, Mr. S.B. Chavan had expressed the view that the situation in the state is conducive for holding elections.

The state governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, during his meeting with Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao gave his assessment of the law and order situation in the state. Earlier, he had discussions with officials of the Home Ministry as well as other ministries on the issue of holding elections.

Indian Official Arrives in Kashmir To Assess Law, Order Situation

BK0302103096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of state for home, Syed Sibte Razi, reached Srinagar today on a two-day

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visit to the valley [Kashmir]. He will take stock of the law and order situation in the state at a meeting with senior government officials in Srinagar this afternoon.

A high-level Congress-I delegation led by the AICC [All India Congress-I Committee] joint secretary, Major Ved Prakash, is also visiting the valley. The delegation has come to Srinagar to condole the death of former MLC [member of the legislative council] Ghulam Rasool, who was killed by the militants recently.

India's BJP, National Conference Oppose Elections in Kashmir

BK0202163096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Political parties have expressed divergent views on the issue of holding elections to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly during their discussions with the home minister in New Delhi today. While the Congress-I held that the situation is conducive to hold elections in the state, the National Conference and the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] opposed the idea. The 13- member Congress-I delegation led by the state unit chief, Ghulam Rasool Kar, told the home minister that the party wants an early elections to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, preferably before the Lok Sabha polls. On the issue of autonomy to the state, the party said it should be decided by the elected representatives of the state.

The National Conference conveyed to Mr. S.B. Chavan that the situation is not conducive to hold free and fair polls in the state. Talking to newspersons later, the party president, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, said a large number of people have migrated from the state and efforts should be made to bring them back. He said first there should be elections to the Lok Sabha and the new government at the Center should decide about the elections to the state assembly.

The BJP also maintained that the situation in the state is not conducive to hold free and fair polls. The five-member party delegation led by the state unit president, Mr. Ved Vishnu Dutt, however, said they will participate in the elections as and when these are held. The party opposed the idea of autonomy to the state.

Talking to newspersons informally after the meeting, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, refused to comment on today's meeting and said he has still to form an opinion about the meeting. When asked if the Center is ready to hold polls in the state, Mr. Chavan reiterated that the government can hold elections and there will be no problems. The second round of consultations will be held tomorrow. The Janata Dal, the CPI [Communist Party of India], the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist], the Panthers Party, and other parties will exchange views with the home minister. Groups representing the Kashmiri migrants will also have separate meetings with Mr. Chavan on the subject.

Indian Correspondent Reports on Situation in Kashmir

BK0202144896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reports from occupied Kashmir speak of widespread strikes and demonstrations against Indian military repression. After the juma [Friday] prayers, a large number of people took to the streets at various major towns of the occupied valley and demanded immediate end to atrocious operations by the Indian troops. The current spate of protests is triggered by increased incidents of custodial killings and indiscriminate arrests during siege and search operations. People in occupied Kashmir valley went on strike protesting against killing of 20 people in Kahuta in Azad Kashmir in rockets fired by Indian troops last Friday. During the last 24 hours at least 25 people were killed, reports our special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal from New Delhi.

[Begin Khayal recording] Indian armored forces shot dead nine people in border town of Kupwara in northwest of Kashmir valley. Eyewitnesses told this correspondent on phone that soldiers rounded up 10 villagers Tuesday night and their bullet ridden bodies were recovered next morning. The entire town observed a shut down in protest against these custodial killings. Among those killed were included Master Abdul Aziz Paray, a zonal officer in the State Education Department, a few more government employees, and supporters of Jamaat-i-Islami party. The whereabouts of 10 persons are not known. Kashmir valley also went on a strike protesting against killing of 20 people in Kahuta in Azad Kashmir in the rocket fire allegedly opened by Indian troops last Friday. During the last 24 hours, at least 25 people were killed in the valley. An official agency confirmed that soldiers suffered heavy casualties in South Kashmir when fighters fired on them from a hideout. Four fighters were also killed in the encounter. At three places in North Kashmir, 10 more persons were killed by the forces during search operations conducted from house-to-house for about 7 hours. Most of them are reported to be civilians and not the fighters.

Ghulam Nabi Khayal, PTV news, New Delhi, India. [end recording]

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CPI-M Urges Janata Dal To Abide by Indian Election Alliance Pact

BK0402102996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CPI-M [Communist Party of India- Marxist] has asked the Janata Dal to stick to the agreement on poll alliances, particularly with the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh. In a strongly worded letter to [Janata Dal President] Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav, the CPI-M general secretary, Mr. Harkishen Singh Surjeet, said the Janata Dal must follow the policies agreed upon during the recent discussions between it and the left parties. The CPI-M leader said his party is not against a tie-up with the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh, but it must not be at the cost of the NF-LF [National Front-Left Front] alliance with the Samajwadi Party.

Mr. Surjeet told our correspondent that the leaders of the left parties are expected to discuss the issue with Mr. Lalu Prasad Jadav in New Delhi tomorrow. He denied that there was any direct threat by the CPI-M to pull out of the NF-LF combine.

Iran

Iranian Atomic Energy Chief Interviewed on Nuclear Issues

NC0602085096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0355 GMT 6 Feb 96

[From the "Iran: My Land" feature]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [First announcer] The respected guest on today's "Iran: My Land" is Dr. Amrollahi, vice president and head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, who we thank for being here.

[Second announcer] You are very welcome. We congratulate you and your good colleagues on the Ten Days of Dawn. If you would also like to congratulate the dear listeners, please do so.

[Amrollahi] In the name of God, the almighty and merciful. I congratulate everyone on the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution of our country, on the auspicious Ten Days of Dawn, and on the auspicious month of Ramadan. I also greet you and your colleagues.

[Both announcers] Thank you very much.

[First announcer] Dr. Amrollahi, how did the revolution perform in the field of atomic energy?

[Amrollahi] It is better to say what the performance of atomic energy has been in the context of the revolution. The most major post-revolutionary effort by my colleagues and myself in the field of nuclear industry has been to give this industry an indigenous character. Everything we will talk about today is in relation to the peaceful use of the nuclear industry. And I would like to tell all the dear listeners that more than 90 percent of the radiology medicine is entirely manufactured in our country today. I compare this not only with the first years after the revolution but even until 1987 when we purchased all such medicines from abroad with foreign exchange. Fortunately today we are manufacturing these medicines, which meet international standards, at home with the help of our brothers and sisters. We are also exporting these medicines and hope to find good markets.

[Second announcer] Thank you very much. We will continue our discussion. [passage omitted]

Dr. Amrollahi, why are the enemies of the revolution and of Iran so sensitive about our country's nuclear activities and why do they resort to such evil propaganda?

[Amrollahi] The enemies of our revolution and of Islam do not like to see the Muslims progress. And naturally, part of progress and growth is linked with industry and technology, particularly advanced technology. Nuclear technology is an advanced technology. They do not want us to progress in this field because they are aware that if we achieve self-sufficiency and if we gain the knowledge that we need, we will no longer need them and that their pressures, not only on our country, but on all the other Muslims in the world, will decrease and even completely disappear.

I was speaking about our performance in the field of nuclear energy during the post-revolutionary years. We have manufactured various lasers. We have helped nuclear medicine to progress very well in our country today. We have been able to manufacture small- scale trial reactors—so-called zero power and miniature reactors. We have also worked on nuclear agriculture. I can say that one of our most major achievements after the revolution was that we were finally able to guide the Bushehr [Nuclear Power] Plant toward completion, something that I will talk about later.

At any rate, the major pressures and direction of our enemies' propaganda, as you yourself can see day and night, is to prevent the progress and elevation of the Muslims. And I think that today our enemies have come to realize that the main base of Islam is our country, hence their efforts against us.

[Second announcer] We thank you very much. We will return to our discussion. [passage omitted]

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[First announcer] Dr. Amrollahi, what phase has the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, which is our country's largest nuclear energy project, reached and when will it become operational?

[Amrollahi] As you know, this project has gone through various phases. We finally signed an agreement with Russia last year and studies and activities began. But some changes had to be made, and the studies for these changes—almost two truckloads of plans and documents—were fortunately completed. Some construction activities have begun and I think they are progressing very well. We hope that, God willing, this project will be completed in the Second Development Plan.

I would like to make some points. I think that as far as the troubles that America and Germany have given us in connection with this power plant, apart from being a political issue between the two, it was also an issue of technological rivalry. This is what we all saw. However, we are a member of the NPT [preceding abbreviation in English, Non-Proliferation Treaty] and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] and they did not have any reason to delay us or bother us. But all of our people know how the West prevented our activities for 10 years through its pressures, and for 10 years we did not have electricity and energy. We actually had a black-out. And one could say that one of the ways that they harmed our revolution and put pressure on us was this project—something that everyone saw. Although we had paid an astronomical sum for this project, they did not allow it to be completed and they did not allow us to use our electricity.

Here I would like to say that, basically speaking, America has double standards when it comes to the nuclear industry. In other words, it puts pressure on countries like ours and creates obstacles, while it extends all the necessary facilities to the countries that are its friends or puppets. Today we see how Israel has 200 nuclear warheads and no one has anything to do with it. It is also not a member of the NPT and it does not accept the IAEA. We also see how it is obstructing efforts to free our region of nuclear arms. But when we want to get energy even from one power plant, America prevents us.

[First announcer] We have run out of time. Thank you very much.

Daily Discusses 'Spiteful' U.S. Policy on Iran

NC0202130596 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 22 Jan 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Nations: Unrecognized Assemblages"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpts] Nations are unrecognized assemblages; even their own statesmen can underestimate their political strength, capabilities, and patience. But nations have many untapped capabilities that if correctly identified and used can turn into a raging, invincible, and even legendary force.

This general definition can apply to any nation any time. But our great nation is proud that it has displayed all its capabilities and strengths in action. [passage omitted]

History has shown that those who have not learned from the past will learn in future. All the facts show that America has not learned the necessary lessons from the past. In future it must learn more bitter lessons. In confronting the revolution, Islam, and the brave Iranian nation America resorted to the most savage methods from the start. Frankly speaking, it has committed every crime or act of treason. America has acquired a black record throughout 17 years of confrontation with the Iranian nation. But America's spiteful secretary of state, Warren Christopher, recently stated angrily that Washington has not given up and will continue its enmity with Iran. Christopher has listed the following conditions to end American hostility toward the Iranian nation:

1. Iran must adhere to America's world policies;

2. Iran must not interfere in the Arab-Israeli peace process;
3. Iran must end its support for liberation and Islamic movements.

These remarks by Christopher list America's futile dreams and reveal the motives behind the allocation of $20 million to plots, crimes, and terrorism against the Iranian nation. By resorting to plots and crimes, Washington wants to retry its luck in bringing the Iranian nation to its knees.

America has again failed to recognize the true nature of the Iranian nation and is still making a mistake. If the Americans had spent $20 million 17 years ago to get to know the Iranian nation better and if American universities and academicians had been called on to carry out a comprehensive study of Iran's morphology and sociology, the Americans would not be so disgraced in the eyes of the world and would not be so isolated among their own allies.

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America does not know nations well and does not consider them in its political-social equations. This is why, when a nation stands up and seriously confronts Washington's bullying, America's nose is rubbed in the dirt.

Christopher's three conditions are not new. But they have displayed the American secretary of state's shortsightedness. Possibly no one in American politics has suffered as many defeats and failures in world diplomacy as Christopher. America is now more isolated than it has been for decades in its confrontation of a nation. The more it calls on others to follow, the more isolated it becomes.

The current global conditions and Washington's consecutive defeats show that America does not recognize the Iranian nation and Government, that it lacks the correct recognition of its own allies in the West, and that it even refuses to recognize its allies' "independent vote" and "independent action." Based on this calculation, the political scientists in the American universities could be correct in saying that $20 million will achieve nothing and the American Government should spend much more. But if Washington wants to gain from this expense, it would be better for it to spend the money on recognizing nations in today's eventful world. Since it is so enraged by the independence of the Iranian nation, it should make a comprehensive and precise recognition of the Iranian nation's characteristics and actions a "top priority." Otherwise the world will again witness more defeats and failures by America and Washington's spiteful diplomacy.

U.S. Said Using Fear To Justify Military Presence in Gulf

LD0502185096 Tehran IRNA in English 1801 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 5 (IRNA) — Spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry Mahmud Mohammadi said here today that a statement by a commander of the U.S. Navy to the UAE [United Arab Emirates] Arabic daily ETTEHAD to the effect that Iran had beefed up her military capacity three times since 16 years ago aimed simply at justifying U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. Navy official has told the UAE daily that Iran was a threat (to the countries of the region).

The spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry said that Iran advocated peace and stability in the Persian Gulf, and that in keeping with the same spirit it had kept the Hormuz Strait open even at the height of the war years with Iraq.

Tehran Spokesman Dismisses Remarks by Commander U.S. 5th Fleet

LD0502173796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In response to the remarks made by the commander of the U.S. 5th Fleet, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi described them as an attempt to justify the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf region and the sale of more weapons to regional countries.

He said: The Islamic Republic of Iran wants peace and stability in the Persian Gulf region and it kept the Hormuz Strait open under the most difficult conditions during the U.S.-imposed war.

He said the willy-nilly U.S. presence coupled with provocations by its fleet in the Persian Gulf region were the main cause of instability and insecurity in the area.

Iranian Commentary Calls For Change of Government in Bahrain

NC0202130196 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 30 Jan 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "Bahrain and the Need for a Change of the Power Structure"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The diminutive island of Bahrain continues to be in the grip of domestic crisis, but the Manama government feels that by continuing suppression, individual and group arrests, and intensification of the pressure against the Shiites, it will be able to control the situation. In this shaykhdom, daily reports of continuing arrests and imprisonment of ordinary citizens and Shiite clerics are disseminated. Only yesterday, the Manama government announced news of the impending trial of 180 persons who have been arrested.

In the past few months, hundreds of Shiites opposed to the policies of the al-Khalifah regime in Bahrain have been arrested. These arrests have gained even greater momentum since the events of 18 and 19 January, when at least 80 incidents of deliberate arson and dozens of explosions occurred in this shaykhdom. The al- Khalifah defense force, which does not exceed 8000, was sent to the streets to control the situation.

The Muslim people of Bahrain want a revival of the parliamentary system in the country, an end to centralization of power in the hands of the al-Khalifah family, and they object to the imposition of economic hardships, including unemployment on the Shiites—who constitute more than half of the population of Bahrain.

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In 1354 [year beginning 21 March 1975], the Bahraini parliament was dissolved by Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman al-Khalifah and power remains a monopoly in the hands of the al-Khalifah clan. Nevertheless, in 1371 [year beginning 21 March 1992], an assembly called the consultative council was set up in place of the parliament and was comprised of 30 notables and magnates directly appointed by the Shaykh of Bahrain.

This council was created in response to proliferating protests and social opposition to the lack of a judiciary in the country but, due to its affiliation with the ruling family, it could not assert its independence in the political field. The Manama government continues its efforts to perpetuate its supremacy with sole power residing with the al-Khalifah clan and its opposition to division of power among the three branches of government, that is, the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary. This phenomenon, that is, trying to surpass a legislative and parliamentary system, is one of the main factors that have spawned the crises in the social systems of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries, which erupt from time to time.

The small countries in the Persian Gulf region mostly lean toward rule by the shaykh, which is another manifestation of the monopoly of power. This phenomenon can be observed in all its intensity and weakness not only in Bahrain, but all the shaykhdoms in the region.

The opponents of the Bahraini government want a return to the parliamentary system, respect for the political and religious freedoms of the people in their society, release of political prisoners, and nonharassment by government forces in the Bahraini mosques. They believe that for many years, the Bahraini government has been following a discriminatory policy against the Shiites, who comprise more than half of the population of 500,000 in the country and have the highest unemployment statistics.

The Bahraini rulers, who strive to mask their weaknesses by ascribing their domestic crisis to factors beyond their frontiers, should instead seek the roots of this unrest inside their minuscule littoral island in the Persian Gulf. The Bahraini crisis is rooted in the social, economic, and political structure of the country. As long as this setup, based on the absolute dictatorship of one elitist family over the nation, is not revamped, one cannot hope for any improvement of the situation.

Tehran Daily Says 'Arafat Will Be Further 'Disgraced'

NC0102223196 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 22 Jan 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "The Elections Will Not Save 'Arafat Either"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Last Saturday the inhabitants in the self-rule area under Yasir 'Arafat's control went to the polls for elections, the outcome of which was obvious from the very beginning. [passage omitted]

Nevertheless, the majority of Palestinians consider 'Arafat's rule to be illegitimate and illegal and believe that the elections cannot justify the illegitimacy of his regime. On this basis, despite figures that have been published by the self-rule government, most of the Palestinian people refused to go to the polls. The elections, which were boycotted by the majority of the Palestinian groups, were held at a time when at least 4 million Palestinian refugees are living outside Palestinian borders and thousands of them are imprisoned under dire conditions in Zionist dungeons. Naturally, under such conditions, the elections could not have had the least bit of legal or popular credibility and should only be referred to as yet another link in the chain of American- Zionist plots to destroy the Palestinians' aspirations—a link which was manifested with 'Arafat's visit to America and his handshake with the criminal prime minister of Israel. [passage omitted]

Actually, with each passing day since the wretched agreement between 'Arafat and the deceased Rabin, more signs of the disgrace of a person who was once considered as a symbol and hero of the Palestinians' struggle against usurping Israel becomes visible. With that agreement, 'Arafat harmed the reputation that the PLO had gained through three decades of struggle. What happened on the Middle East scene last Ordibehesht [month beginning 21 April] was nothing but the death of what was left of 'Arafat's reputation in the region. Otherwise, nothing has changed in the geographic situation of the occupied territories.

Today 'Arafat has linked his fate with the disgraceful consequences of his pact with the Zionists and he has no other alternative but to accept the ambiguous fate that his allies have determined for him. 'Arafat has now fallen into a large trap that the Zionists and Americans have set for him—a trap from which he cannot escape. He will not be able to decrease the intensity of the anti-Zionist movement in occupied Palestine in the least, and his efforts to do so will only further disgrace him and the disintegrating system that he heads.

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Iran: PUK Leader Cited on Problems in Iraqi Kurdistan

NC0202132596 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 30 Jan 96 pp 1, 14

[Report on an "exclusive" interview with PUK leader Jalal Talabani by unidentified TEHRAN TIMES correspondent in al-Sulaymaniyah, Iraq; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In an exclusive interview with the TEHRAN TIMES Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Party (PUK) of Iraq elaborated on several issues pertaining to the Iraqi Kurdistan.

Q. At the present stage of the Middle East peace process, and with Syria's new position which nay lead to closer ties with Iraq, do you think that you, as a person, and your party can have more influence in Iraq's future?

A. Yes. As the PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan] and the Iraqi people, and as the opposition forces mobilize to overthrow the dictatorship and form a coalition government which can guarantee democratic rights for he Iraqi people, we will have a bigger share in Iraq's future.

I don't think that the peace process in Syria is very closely connected to our developments. I think these developments depend primarily on the forces inside Iraq rather than those outside.

Q. Don't you have problems within Iraq with other parties?

A. Yes, of course. We have problems. If we reach an agreement over the main goal which is ending the dictatorship—we can overcome all difficulties. If we agree that all Iraqi forces must unite and struggle against the dictatorship, then other differences will be resolved.

Q. Do you think you will have foreign aid?

A. We need to help our friends and brothers outside Iraq. We especially need the help of neighboring countries. We will be glad to receive unconditional support of anyone in the world.

Q. Are you prepared to receive support from Israel?

A. No. I don't think so. I think that is not the right way to support the struggle of the Iraqi people against dictatorship. Iraqi dictatorship has divided Arab countries; Iraqi dictatorship began a war among Arabs which divided Arab countries. Saddam deserves support from Israel for dividing the Arabs. Why would Israel help the Iraqi people against Saddam?

Q. Have you all agreed that Saddam Husayn's term is over; are you seeking someone to lead Iraq?

A. How can we know? How can we influence developments which are unknown? Who expected the fall of the Shah of Iran? In 1978 politicians described Iran as an "Island of stability". Who says that the same thing could not happen in Iraq?

Q. The Iraqi people are suffering. There is hunger and malnutrition. They are tired of domestic struggle. Do you think that these problems will prevent you from reaching your goals?

A. The Iraqi people are suffering; there is starvation; there is inflation. If you consider Iraqi Kurdistan and compare it with other parts of Iraq, although we, too, are suffering, we are doing better than the rest of Iraq.

The problems of Iraqi Kurdistan cannot be separated from the problems of Iraq, since the main cause of these problems is Iraqi dictatorship. Unless the dictatorship comes to and end and a popular regime is established, the problems of the Iraqi people— including Iraqi Kurdistan—will remain.

Q. I talked to some people who have lost their hopes. They think that their leaders are preventing them from reaching solutions to their problems? What is your comment?

A. It is true that the economic situation is bad, but for the first time Iraqi Kurdistan is free; for the first time the Kurds are not ruled by Iraq; for the first time all Kurds are enjoying democratic rights, freedom of speech, having newspapers, political parties, television, radio.

Many are sacrificing their lives. How many of your people in Iran died for overthrowing the Iranian dictatorship? The same is true for the Kurdish people.

How can we run our factories if the embargo continues? How we can develop our agriculture if there is no connection to the outside world? How we can sell our oil if there is no way to transport it?

Q. In Iraq there is an urgency for helping the needy. But people are not sure that food and medicine will be delivered to their brothers and sisters. How do you assure people that what they send will be delivered to the right people?

A. Firstly, you have the Red Crescent, which can come and bring what you want delivered to the people. The Red Crescent can deliver it directly to the people, without any intervention from Iraqi Kurds, or from any group in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Secondly, Iraqi Kurds are now in great need of fuel — petrol. You can send it here and sell it. You don't have to send it for free. There are many ways to help us.

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2. We believe imports and exports of the region must be under the control of a central office, not that each one of us have control over one corner of imports. [no No.1 as published]

3. For solving problems one must prevent independent decision-making.

4. Border security also must be under the supervision of one center and one government, and confrontation with the problem of PKK must have one policy.

On his assessment of the Tehran's agreement he said, "Tehran's agreement is able to solve our problems. We believe that the Islamic Republic can solve the turmoil of Iraqi Kurdistan. Iran understands our problems, and can find a solution. He added, Americans in understanding of the depth of our problem are not successful.

On Iranian opposition using Iraqi territory against Iran, he said, "No armed group has the right to use Iraqi Kurdistan as a military base against Iran." He added, until now 25 members of terrorist organizations carrying activities against Iran have been arrested, their arms confiscated and they have been poisoned.

Q. Are you receiving the proper aid from foreign organizations? A. There are some sections of the United Nations. There are also many non-governmental organizations in various countries. They are, of course, delivering, but unfortunately what we receive from donors are not what we need. They do not go toward rehabilitating our agriculture, they do not support reconstruction of main roads and even the junctures in towns and cities. They are sending us things which are not so beneficial for the Iraqi Kurds. The UN is also helping, but not in the right way.

Q. My last question: Did you talk with Aqa Mohammadi (representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Iraqi affairs) and what was the outcome of your talks?

A. Yes. We had a very good and pleasant discussion with Haj Aqa Mohammadi. I think that his visit is important. We are optimistic of the results — good results for the common benefit of our two peoples. We think we can reach agreements and a better understanding of many problems. Then we can act for the benefit of Iranian and Iraqi people.

Speaking of the reasons for lack of peace in Iraqi Kurdistan, Talabani said, "Four basic reasons prevent peace in Kurdistan. (1) With regard to Saddam, our policy is the same as that of the Democratic Party. We believe that so long as Saddam is in power, Iraq's situation will not be free from its present situation, but Barzani believes one can make peace with Saddam. [number of reasons as published]

Iranian Daily Views Consequences of Iraq's Reentry into Oil Market

NC0202135496 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 27 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Oil-for-Food for Iraq, While Protecting OPEC Economies"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It has been more than five years since economic sanctions have been imposed on Iraq. This was primarily due to the fact the Saddam Husayn would not abide by international law. For example, the international community would like him to stop developing chemical weapons and to monitor Iraq's weapons development.

Sanctions such as this always imposes an inadvertent, unjust, and unnecessary hardship on civilians. They are meant for the government, but it is civilians who suffer the most. Since the beginning of sanctions more than 500,000 Iraqi children have died of malnutrition or lack of medicine. By any standard, this is wrong.

In order to prevent disease, poverty and death befalling innocent civilians, the UN has offered Iraq an oil-for-food exchange, an offer Iraq has repeatedly rejected since April 1994, calling it interference in and an affront to its national sovereignty.

Recently, however, Iraq has showed signs that it would accept this UN offer. We support this exchange for the simple reason that, already, too many civilians have died; this exchange of oil for food should have happened sooner.

As most actions, Iraq's reentry into the oil market will have certain other consequences. Under the agreement, Iraq is allowed to pump $2 billion worth of oil for six months under international supervision. This addition of oil into the world market will result in a sharp decline in oil prices. Saudi Arabia and Iran will be two of the biggest losers. If oil prices drop by a mere $1 per barrel, each OPEC country will lose $1 multiplied by the number of barrels it produces per day.

When sanctions were imposed on Iraq, pushing it out of the oil market, Saudi Arabia increased its oil output from 6 million barrels to 8 million barrels per day. It is now proper for all OPEC countries to return to their previous level of oil production in order to protect oil prices for OPEC countries.

Saudi Arabia, the country which has most benefited from the Iraqi oil sanctions, should now reduce its oil production more than any other OPEC country. This will

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help the Saudis as well as other OPEC members protect their interests by preventing an oil glut. The alternative is an oil glut with low prices which will be tantamount to an auction of our assets for a relatively small amount of hard currency.

We support the oil-for-food exchange on humanitarian grounds; we support supervision over Iraq in order to monitor the development of weapons of mass destruction and to oversee that the food and medicine reach the intended beneficiaries, but we do not wish to glut the market with oil and hurt our own economies.

Iranian Editorial Views Importance of Regional Cooperation

NC0202181196 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 24 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Iran Ready to Sacrifice National Interests for Regional Interests"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] During his two-day visit to Iran, President Suparmurat Niyazov concluded several agreements facilitating not only the expansion of bilateral ties, but that of trilateral ties between Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia.

The agreements concentrate on cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan in oil and gas, construction of a dam on the Harir Rud (River), and linking the two countries' power networks. Iran and Turkmenistan have also agreed to set up joint ventures, to establish a joint chamber of commerce and, in certain cases, eliminate import duty.

In the joint communique signed by the two countries, Iran and Turkmenistan reiterated that the current crises in the region, especially in Afghanistan, Karabakh and Tajikistan should be resolved through negotiations.

They expressed concern over the unilateral exploitation of the Caspian Sea resources, calling on the littoral states to formulate the legal regime in order to design a plan for the exploitation of its resources. Formulation of the Caspian Sea regime would be a great stride toward a peaceful cooperation among its littoral states.

Iran's attempts at boosting regional cooperation is clear to all members of the international community and to neighbors in particular. Iran is prepared to sacrifice its national interests for the sake of regional interests. Peace and stability are crucial prerequisites to regional development.

Iran's mediation attempts have been aimed at restoring peace to South Asia, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Peaceful coexistence and non-interference in our neighbors' affairs have been the two pillars of our foreign policy.

Nevertheless, at certain times under the influence of imperialist propaganda, intentionally or unintentionally, certain neighbors level baseless charges against us. One such allegation is the recent statement, attributed to the Tajik president, accusing Iran of sponsoring terrorism.

Tajik officials should know that negotiation and accommodation are the best way to peace. Indeed, the assassination of Mufti Fathullo Sharifov will further complicate the peace process in Tajikistan. If Tajik officials do not accommodate the opposition, peace will not come to Tajikistan. If President Rakhmanov settles problems at home amicably, it would lead to active participation in the process of regional development.

Iran is prepared to join hands with any country in Central Asia and the Caucasus provided that those countries follow an independent foreign policy, free from big power influence.

Tehran Criticizes British Delays in Ulster Peace Process

LD0402133796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1108 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a criticism of British policy, the Irish foreign minister has called on the British Government not to bury the process of establishing peace and stability in Northern Ireland by prolonging and postponing the peace talks for that region.

Three years ago, the process of establishing peace in Northern Ireland began with more vigor and at its height, 16 months ago, the Irish Republican Army [IRA] agreed a cease-fire. That development, which was evaluated as a big stride toward peace and created great expectations for an end to the 25-year-long conflict in that region, has been practically paralyzed by the British Government's resistance and opposition and by the loyalist Protestants, who are in majority in Northern Ireland.

At first, the British Government demanded the disarmament of the IRA. That demand was strongly rejected by Irish Catholics for two reasons. The first was that that unilateral plan could leave them totally defenseless and vulnerable in the face of loyalist Protestants, who are not only armed but also enjoy the support of the royal British Army and police. Second, Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, believes that disarmament of the armed groups should be the outcome of the peace negotiations and cannot be raised as a precondition by the British Government.

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Nevertheless, after negotiations and international mediation, the British Government, in a bid to prolong and postpone its withdrawal from Ireland, proposed that parliamentary elections be held for Northern Ireland and that this elected parliament give its views on talks by all parties involved in the Irish conflict. Clearly, because the Protestants supporting Britain are in a majority, Catholics would be in a minority in such a parliament. That assembly will be voting on talks with Sinn Fein. That is why the statements by the Irish foreign minister, who said the British plan to bury the peace process, is not without truth.

Anyhow, although some action has been taken since 1985, when the Irish Republic's mediation and role in Northern Ireland was officially recognized, none of it can be taken as an indication of a settlement of the conflict. Those actions have been largely to control the conflict and prevent its exacerbation. In fact the two sides of the conflict have been carrying out a sort of crisis management while their political positions remain virtually unchanged and strongly held.

IRAN NEWS: Delaying Airlift To Kabul Will Be 'Catastrophe'

LD0502121696 Tehran IRNA in English
1042 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 5, IRNA — The English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' Monday voiced concern over devastating situation in Kabul reporting, 80 percent of its 1.2 million inhabitants are at the brink of starvation and their personal safety is constantly endangered. "The situation has worsened since mid-October when the Taliban appeared on the country's confused political, social and military scene," added the editorial.

The editorial also criticized cancellation of two shipments of humanitarian aid for Kabul by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) "because of lack of a food export license" which is regularly issued by the Pakistan government.

"If the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, or some other influential group in the Pakistani government, prevent emergency airlifts from Peshawar to Kabul in order to exert pressure on the government of Borhanoddin Rabbani in favor of the Taliban, they will be responsible for the worst catastrophe to befall the Afghan people and humanity as a whole."

It regretted that the hunger for power is so strong among the various Afghan factions that they have become blind to their country's national interests and are pursuing purely factional objectives. Referring to conflict among different Afghan groups, it wrote, "having lost the support of their own people, the heads of various Afghan factions are now busy visiting regional capitals in search of foreign help." Since these afghan leaders have proven themselves incapable of handling the Afghan crisis by themselves, the burden once again falls on Tehran and Islamabad which gave shelter to the Afghan refugees during the Russian occupation of that country, to do all they can to bring peace to this beleaguered nation.

Tehran Daily Editorial on Iraqi Oil Embargo

LD0602103696 Tehran IRNA in English
0744 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 6, IRNA — A morning daily Tuesday editorialized on the crucial meeting between Iraq and the U.N. which is to begin today in New York to discuss resumption of Iraqi oil exports for the first time in almost six years.

'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' wrote that politically, the embargo on Baghdad serves its purpose for the U.S. and Britain who in an odd way still see Iraq as a challenge to their interests in the Middle East region.

"For economic reasons, there are some Arab countries who seek to maintain the embargo on Baghdad. Saudi Arabia is the chief beneficiary of the sanctions which have kept Iraqi oil off the market," it underlined.

For this reason, these two veto powers in the Security Council have been constantly clamoring for continuation of the sanctions and have used their vote to block its lifting.

"The oil embargo and trade sanctions imposed since Baghdad's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait have crushed the Iraqi economy, but not in anyway mellowed Saddam Husayn. In fact the Ba'th party chief has grown meaner towards his people and the harassment of the Shiites and Kurds by his troops is continuing."

Commenting on human sufferings with sky-rocketing prices and denial of essential items in Iraq, KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL concluded, "getting bogged down in resolutions and protocol will only deny and deprive the Iraqi people of their urgent needs.

TEHRAN TIMES Denounces U.S. Presence in Gulf

LD0502122396 Tehran IRNA in English
0925 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 5, IRNA — A morning daily Monday denounced the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf saying, since the U.S.-led allied invasion of Iraq in 1991 under the pretext of rescuing Kuwait, the U.S. has not missed any opportunity to augment its military presence in the region. Commenting on

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military capability of Iraq and other Persian Gulf mini-states, 'TEHRAN TIMES' stated that they are not even in a position to defend their own territories to be considered possible threats to the regions's security. "Without any doubt the main threat to regional security comes from the presence of alien forces and unprecedented stockpile of arms and ammunition in the tiny Arab states of the Persian Gulf."

Today, the U.S. is playing the old card, but this time it is Iran which is being projected by Washington as threat to the region's security. Referring to Islamic Republic's foreign policy, it noted, "internationally accepted statistics show that Iran has the lowest military expenditure in the Middle East."

Since Washington has to justify its illegal presence in the region, on the one hand, and prepare a ground for sale of arms to the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, on the other, it every now and then levels baseless charges against Iran, it stressed.

Not only the Islamic Iran is no threat to regional security but also, it is a source of stability for this strategic region, TEHRAN TIMES underscored suggesting that Washington had better leave the responsibility of maintaining regional security to the regional states and clear the region of its illegitimate presence.

Iran's Guardian Council To Reject Corrupt Candidates

LD0502161696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Elections Supervisory Headquarters of the Guardian Council issued a statement today warning candidates who have resorted to actions such as bribery, or those who have gained the support of certain opportunist individuals in order to attract votes, that they will be rejected.

The statement reads: In accordance with the decisive orders of the esteemed leader [Khamene'i] at his meeting with supervisory committees — saying that greedy people and those put forward by feudal lords and hooligans who wish to enter the Majles by taking advantage of the people's money and ignorance must be rejected immediately; and those who pay money to the people or grease their palms are unsuitable people; and those who wish to usurp a valuable place at the Majles for financial reasons and with the aim of obtaining material goods must be stopped — if any of the above mentioned cases are discovered they will be rejected.

In the statement the Guardian Council also warns against the misuse of public property and government facilities in favor of the candidates.

Iranian Officials Using State Facilities in Campaign Face Dismissal

LD0302103796 Tehran IRNA in English 0954 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 3, IRNA — Head of the State Inspectorate Organization, Hojjat ol-Eslam Ebrahim Ra'isi, said government organizations are banned from using state facilities for election campaigns to the benefit of certain candidates in the March 8 Majles elections. In an interview with the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES', he said the minimum penalty for an offender is dismissal and other penalties will also be given as provided by law.

Under Article 67 of the election law, the judiciary gave the responsibility of election supervision to the State Inspectorate Organization, he said, adding however that this responsibility is limited to governmental and semi-governmental organizations.

The supervision process is carried out in stages: responding to complaints, investigating under the order of the judiciary chief, the president, leader of the revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, as well as continuous self-initiated inspection in order to assure that everything is done in accordance with the law.

He said the organization has offices in ten provinces, adding that contrary to past practices, it will not wait for complaints to be lodged but will itself seek out existing improprieties.

Ban on Public Officials' Participation in Iran Election Campaign

LD0202180096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of the state election headquarters has announced: According to Article 56 of the Election Law, public officials are not allowed to engage in election campaign activities in support of one or more of the candidates for the Fifth Islamic Consultative Majles.

Speaking to a Central News Unit reporter, he explained the method of campaigning by election candidates and their supporters for the Majles. Referring to the Note 2 of Article 58 of the election law, he said: According to that note, public departments and organizations and their staff are not allowed to campaign for or against any candidate by specifying the position they hold. If any such person seeks to embark on a campaign, he must only use his first and last names in any publicity material without any mention of his title or position.

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He stressed: Any use of public facilities for election campaign in support of one or more candidates is also legally disallowed. No one has the right to use such facilities for such purposes.

He added: The law forbids publications which belong to public organizations, ministries, departments, and municipalities to campaign for or against candidates — even if this takes the form of an advertisement.

As far as election campaigning by groups, societies, and parties is concerned, the head of the state election headquarters stressed: The formations which seek to carry out election campaigns must have registered their articles of association, charter, and identity of their leaders as a group, society, or party at the Interior Ministry and hold a licence for their activities.

Interior Minister: Iran Majles Election Campaign To Begin 1 Mar

LD0402125296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati informed a gathering of the nationwide regional commanders of law enforcement forces of commander in chief Ayatollah Khamene'i's satisfaction with the performance of the law enforcement forces. Besharati described it as the greatest honor for the force. He said: Iran is the most secure country in the world and this security is, to a great extent, owed to the services and self-sacrifice of the law enforcement forces.

Referring to the fifth Majles elections, Besharati added: Under present conditions, creating sound grounds for the elections is the Interior Ministry's most important duty. Maintaining the security of the election constituencies is the same as maintaining the country's security, and the law enforcement forces will not allow that security to be harmed.

The interior minister stressed his ministry's impartiality in the elections and pointed out: Election campaign opportunity must be equally available to all candidates and no-one will be allowed to prevent lawful campaigning by the candidates.

Besharati said: Election campaigns for the fifth Majles are to begin on the 1 March for one week. Law enforcement forces are duty bound to prevent any campaigning outside that period.

The number of those who have offered themselves as candidates for the fifth Majles to date was announced by the interior minister to be 3,200.

2,659 Candidates Registered for Iran Majles Elections

LD0302134996 Tehran IRNA in English 1304 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 3, IRNA — The election headquarters at the Interior Ministry announced here on Saturday that 130 mps of the current term of parliament have registered until this noon with the Ministry to run for forthcoming elections scheduled for March 8.

Meanwhile reports coming in from a total of 196 constituencies said that 2,659 candidates have so far registered with the governorates all over the country. 303 hopefuls are from Tehran constituency and 2,356 others from other cities.

Iran Majles Elections: Candidate Verification To Last 5 Days

LD0502223196 Tehran IRNA in English 2152 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 5 (IRNA) — The Majles Elections Headquarters said Monday that queries into the professional qualification and personal character of Majles candidates would be over in five days.

Candidates declared not qualified for any reason can challenge the ruling of the headquarters within four days.

The Majles has five seats for non-Muslim (minority) candidates in Iran for which as many as 30 have applied.

Iran's General Inspectorate To Deal With Election Complaints

LD0402130496 Tehran IRNA in English 1117 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 4., IRNA — Inspector General, Hojjat ol-Eslam Ebrahim Ra'isi announced here on Sunday that a group of experts working with his office and some judges will deal with the people's complaints in order to ensure that the governmental organizations will perform their tasks regarding the forthcoming Majlis elections well.

He added that, based on the election laws, all ministries and governmental organs are bound to cooperate with the Ministry of Interior and the Council of Guardians on the elections.

Noting that the government employees are not permitted to use public assets for or against a parliamentary candidate, Ra'isi reiterated that any contravention of the election laws is punishable, and that the state

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inspectorate will deal with the complaints in this regard lodged by the people and executives.

170,000 Security Personnel To Supervise Iran Majles Elections

LD0502112596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the commander of the country's law enforcement force, a total of 170,000 personnel from the force will be responsible for maintaining security and order during the fifth Majles elections.

Brigadier General Reza Seyfollahi stressed that the law enforcement force personnel will not be allowed to interfere in the executive affairs of the elections or express support for any particular candidate. He said: According to the law, none of the candidates is allowed to start campaigning in cities and villages until the Guardians Council has issued its final verdict [on suitability of the candidates].

He added that the law enforcement force personnel will confront anyone who breaks this law.

Rafsanjani on LEF Role in 'Highly Significant' Elections

LD0602114696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President [Akbar] Hashemi-Rafsanjani, at a meeting with commanders and officials of the Law Enforcement Forces [LEF] today, referring to the excellent record of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the Law Enforcement Forces, in safeguarding the country's stability, security, and tranquillity, stressed the importance of maintaining greater vigilance during the forthcoming Majles elections.

The president described the timing of the elections as highly significant and sensitive because of the political situation and seriousness of rivalry, and he said: During free elections everywhere in the world, when the people demonstrate their interest in the running of affairs, open political rivalry based on zeal, aspirations, party and social affiliations might create particular enthusiasm at certain junctures. The role of the Law Enforcement Forces at this juncture, therefore, attracts particular attention and is quite important.

Reiterating the importance of maintaining law and order during the elections, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani pointed out: At the present, more than ever before, the eyes of the world are watching how the forthcoming elections are being organized in Iran. And the process is monitored with particular sensitivity. The Law Enforcement Forces must, therefore, show the necessary care in performing their duties by observing total neutrality and decisiveness.

The president also paid tribute to the Law Enforcement Forces for their success in the fight against hoarders and smugglers of goods. He said: The fight against hoarding and smuggling is part of the government's policy to support the state economy, and the struggle should continue with greater vigilance. He added: Now that foreign enemies are cooperating with their agents inside the country and with gang-leaders of the corrupt international networks to undermine our country's economy, it is essential to confront them seriously and decisively.

The president praised the tangible and lasting security along the borders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, despite the crises in some neighboring countries. He added: Thanks to the creation and maintenance of security and tranquillity along the country's border areas, it has become possible to implement the largest and the most significant economic projects in these regions.

Election Headquarters Provides Info on Iran Majles Candidates

LD0202153996 Tehran IRNA in English 1531 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 2., IRNA — The elections headquarters said Friday that until 13:00 hours local time Friday 2,248 candidates had registered their names for running at the elections for the fifth term of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament), of whom 219 are candidates are for Tehran constituency.

On Friday 143 candidates registered for the elections, 11 of them for Tehran and 132 for provincial constituencies.

Governor of Tehran 'Ali Payandeh said Friday that as many as 275 candidates had registered their names at the office of the governor of Tehran, 23 of whom were women and 15 non-muslims belonging to the Christian, Jewish and Zorastrian minorities, who have seats reserved in the 270-seat majlis.

He said 96 candidates had registered on the first day of the elections, followed by 61 and 52 on the second day and 66 on Friday, all of them with the office of the governor of Tehran.

He said the supervisory bodies for monitoring the elections at the polling centers for minority representatives in Iran had been formed earlier Friday.

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Iranian Deputy Rules Out Return of 'Technocrats'

NC0202164496 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 21 Jan 96 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Abbas Sheybani, head of the Islamic Majles Health and Hygiene Committee, said the possibility of the return of the "technocrats" [preceding word in English] to the Fifth Majles seemed rather weak.

He told an IRNA correspondent: The claims of this group's members are limited to mere rhetoric or round-table discussions. They have proved that, in practice, they have been unsuccessful.

Dr. Sheybani, who has been a Majles deputy for four terms, said that the composition of the Fifth Majles would be similar to that of the previous one.

He added: Prominent people said to be from the leftist faction are likely to win seats in the Majles. He hoped that the deputies in the Fifth Majles will spend the necessary time to protect the interests of the people, and that their performance will have value and credibility.

The deputy described controlling inflation and high prices, and the strengthening of health and insurance services, especially in the deprived areas, as important issues for the Fifth Majles. He also advocated greater supervision over the implementation of laws.

Dr. Sheybani predicted a massive and active turnout in the elections, adding: The Muslim people of Iran are endowed with social and political awareness. They realize that the safeguarding of Islamic values demands their participation in various activities, such as the elections, which is the most important activity in the country.

Iran's Salamati: Party Will Not 'Coalesce' With Other Groups

LD0202182996 Tehran IRNA in English 1801 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 2, IRNA — Secretary general of the organization of Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution (Sazmaan-e Mojahedin-e Inqelab-e Islami), Mohammad Salamati and member of the governing board of the organization Behzad Nabavi, said here last night that the mojahedin will participate in the parliamentary elections scheduled for March 8.

They said the organization did not intend to coalesce with other groups including the incumbents in the present administration. They said they would not coalesce with groups outside of the center right either.

Salamati said the organization was obviously concerned about the elections and that they would inform the people about facts in that relation and lobby their political outlooks.

He said none of the center left groups had boycotted the elections for the Majles although some of them had refused to publish their candidates on their own slate. He said at the same time some of the center left groups had not yet arrived at a conclusion as to what they would do.

According to Salamati, since other groups relied on much better financial resources, and since the center left groups had not integrated themselves within one single group, they could not hope to get the majority seats in the Majles.

He said, however, that if the few candidates of the center left managed to find their way to the Majles, they would go ahead in a concerted effort to give shape to a mixed economy system as provided for in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic.

Nabavi, a one time minister of heavy industries in former Prime Minister Mir Husayn Musavi's cabinet during the war years, said his organization expected that in the event any of its candidates should happen to be disapproved, the supervisory body should offer sufficient explanation to the public.

He said a list of the organization's candidates was being prepared which, he hoped, would shortly be published.

Iran Majles Official Interviewed on Elections

NC0502090396 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 16 Jan 96 pp 1-2

["Text" of an "exclusive interview" with Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Sobhaninia, deputy from Neyshabur and spokesman for the Iranian Majles Foreign Policy Commission, by an unidentified RESALAT parliamentary correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [RESALAT] What role do parties play in educating the people and increasing their political maturity?

[Sohaninia] If parties engage in healthy political activities based on conditions and criteria consonant with our culture, they will be very effective. Parties should include outstanding and committed personalities who have matured and been seasoned by various aspects of life and people who have successfully passed their tests so that they will be trusted by society. Also, party leaders should not use the people as a ladder to their own success.

Political organizations should provide service as well as educating the people and facilitating people's participation in political and social activities. If a party is built

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on such foundations, it will be welcomed by the people. But the recent commotion about forming parties is only a political sham, still far from reality. Currently there are no people or groups that are trying to form parties on a correct basis; and no outstanding personalities who could act as standard bearers in this process are in sight. Those who have brought up the issue of forming parties are from the lower echelons and they lack extensive backing. Such issues are being raised due to the elections and for propaganda purposes, but they are transient. I think that at this juncture we will not see any strong parties that meet the necessary conditions being formed.

[RESALAT] What is behind the recent hue and cry about the lack of freedom and the negativism that we have recently been hearing and reading about?

[Sobhaninia] The mere fact that there are some who free to unrestrainedly whip up such a commotion and resort to various means to question various personalities, institutions, and policies in this country is good proof that we do have freedom and an open political atmosphere. Our people are both aware and alert; they are also able to tell the truth from lies and good from bad. There have always been such efforts to feign oppression in order to disillusion the people during elections. Our people know that all this commotion is due to the elections, because everybody knows that there have been no changes in our country's political situation that justifies some people resorting to false pretexts to question everything possible.

[RESALAT] Has there been any change in the mode of supervision of the Council of Guardians that has prompted some people to question the elections on this pretext?

[Sobhaninia] Approved supervision is a legal right of the Council of Guardians provided for in the Constitution; it was applied to previous Majles elections too. It is nothing new. Those who question this law know what the issue is, but without any convincing reason, they use this issue to mar the political atmosphere of the elections. This law was enforced in the past. In the Fourth Majles elections this issue was very explicitly included in the law on elections. However, because of their own political grudges some people completely ignore political virtue and question the just scholars and the law-makers who have been appointed by the Majles.

[RESALAT] Is the political atmosphere favorable for the activity of legal groups and formations?

[Sobhaninia] Currently the commission in charge of examining parties follows all the processes provided for in the Constitution, which are faithful to the fundamental principle of the revolution that people have a right to act. There is nothing hindering their active participation in the elections. Political groups can put forth their stands and platforms on solving the country's problems so that the public will be informed and can decide how to vote.

[RESALAT] It seems that recently liberal processes and some people in the garb of liberals are trying to form a specific movement. What is your opinion of this?

[Sobhaninia] There have been liberal processes in the country in the past. But they have been weak and have lacked popular political support. Recently, economic problems have encouraged some to refer to normal issues in society and to slogans of freedom, democracy, and independence in a bid to find a place for themselves among the people. These slogans are aimed at harming the presence of the clergymen and those who are faithful to the values of Islam and the revolution.

Have the clergymen and our state officials opposed science and knowledge and said that affairs should be handed over to experts and technocrats? Many responsibilities of the Majles, the government, and high-ranking managerial positions are in the hands of experts. The main issue is that a process comprising experts who lack the necessary commitment is taking shape; extensive efforts have started through this process to win seats in the Majles. But I think that since liberal processes are alien to the beliefs and culture of our Muslim and pious people, they will not gain support among the masses. Because some newspapers share the views of such processes, efforts are being made to magnify some individuals as experts and technocrats and to form a mouthpiece for these people.

[RESALAT] The Militant Clerics Association has stated that it will not forward any candidates. Some members of the association say people will be encouraged to participate in the elections. What is your opinion on these points?

[Sobhaninia] As far as the Militant Clerics Association is concerned, it considers going to the polls as active participation in the elections. But each political process and group thrives only when it submits platforms and has an organized presence on the various political and social scenes, especially in elections. A group that cannot express its views and platforms at sensitive and vital periods is actually issuing its own death sentence; this means confusing, losing forces, and experiencing internal disintegration. There is a process that claims to fear a repeat of the rejection of candidates seen in the fourth term elections and that says it will thus not tender a list of candidates and will not participate in the elections in an organized manner. What will it say when it is asked why it has said nothing at other sensitive

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periods, for example, on the anniversary of the victory of the revolution, on America's sanctions on Iran, on the plot by world arrogance against the Islamic Revolution, and on many other issues? Did the approved opinions of the Council of Guardians prompt their positions on these occasions too?

[RESALAT] Under the circumstances, what kind of deputies does the Majles need? What is the right way to portray candidates' ethics and what is the right method of propaganda that should be used?

[Sobhaninia] Expertise; experience; correct political, economic, and cultural outlooks; devotion to Islamic values and to the supreme jurisconsult; and support for the government's reconstruction programs are among the conditions a Majles candidate should meet to make the Majles effective and successful. In the election campaign, false promises and efforts to defame people should be avoided and the government's policies and sincere services should not be questioned just to attract attention and to paint a popular and sympathetic picture. A candidate should deal with issues realistically, propose logical solutions to problems, and let the people decide who to vote for.

Editorial Views Iranian Cabinet Members' Statement on Elections

NC0502141296 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 21 Jan 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial by Mohammad Javad Larijani: "The Formation of a Party and Expertise"]

[FBIS Translated Text] 1. Last week, a number of our dear brothers in the cabinet issued a statement in which they tacitly announced the creation of a new political formation. In addition, as stated in some newspapers, in their second statement they intend to present a list of their candidates in Tehran. This new experience should be viewed positively and we should pray to God that they will succeed in adopting correct decisions and in strengthening the foundations of the Islamic system.

2. Criticism and assessment could definitely help our dear brothers as this formation begins its activities, and this is what I intend to do here.

The first fault I find is the unprofessional way that this formation was created even though, fortunately, expertise in the management of state affairs is very obvious in the first statement.

Why do I say unprofessional? I say so because the world has had much experience with parties and political formations. Therefore, better methods could have easily been chosen. Since one of the objectives behind this formation is to help the people in making decisions, a formation should always meet the two major conditions listed below.

First of all, it should set forth important current problems with the management of state affairs and state its own views on how to solve them;

Second, the leadership of the party and its founders should be officially and publicly introduced.

3. The first statement contains extremely kind sentiments about a high dignitary such as Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. It expresses interest in the country's reconstruction and development and in the fact that Islamic Iran should be developed and strong. These are all points that each and every patriot supports and that this country's statesmen have always emphasized.

But the "relevant" issue is: What are our plans for basic and sensitive issues? What are the sensitive issues? I do not think that these issues are hidden today, and the following list covers a large number of them:

—What is our theory on development?

—What is our understanding of economic adjustment and how should we proceed toward this objective?
—What is our understanding of inflation and what are its causes?
—What position will the private sector have in national production?
—What plans do we have for privatization?
—What should our monetary and foreign exchange policies be?
—What do we have to say about encouraging investments?
—What are our plans for social justice?
—What is our outlook on the cultural onslaught?
—What new plans do we have to propose in the field of foreign policy?

If we merely say that we accept Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani's path, we will not have formed a political formation but an open political club. If we merely say that we accept the First and Second [Development] Plans, we will not have said anything new!

4. As was stated, the above group intends to present a list of candidates in its second statement. This is also a very hasty action. If the objective is to guide the people, the people should first become acquainted with the political formation, what it has to say, and who its leaders are and then vote. Doesn't this formation have a name? Doesn't it have any officials in charge, any founders, and any headquarters? Has it been officially registered? How can a first statement that is filled with compliments and sentiments be immediately followed

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by a second statement presenting the names of its candidates? It is precisely for this reason that we say that our brothers in the cabinet have acted in an unprofessional manner.

5. The other problem I see is the cabinet members' entry into the election race. This will have many harmful repercussions, as follows:

First of all, this action may harm the vote of confidence that the cabinet members received from the Majles. It is a prevailing practice world wide that if a minister wants to form a new faction, he re-applies for a vote of confidence.

Second, since the majority of ministers have not joined this formation, the first statement on its founding does not list the names of those who have. This paints a picture of polarization inside the executive system, and this picture only helps to weaken the government.

Third, the polarization inside the government will rapidly spread to the lower echelons, thus igniting specific behaviors. Some of the deputy ministers will then gather in one party and others in another. And this will create great confusion, which will definitely weaken the executive body.

Fourth, a political formation—all the founding members of which are elected or selected members of the cabinet whose immediate intention is to designate a list of Majles candidates—will naturally cast doubts among the people that their intentions are to designate "state deputies" who will, in turn, vote for them tomorrow, too. Since the cabinet's legitimacy depends on the Majles' vote of confidence it would be better if people outside the cabinet formed this party so that their position in the Majles and the Majles' sanctities are safeguarded.

6. At any rate, the birth of the new formation should be taken as a good omen. My advice to the dear brothers who have founded this formation is that they should not be impatient. A political formation should play a significant role in guiding the people. The impact that it has is not limited only to the elections. It can, with "expertise" and by learning from the experiences of other nations and those of our own dear nation, especially in the post- revolutionary era, make this a strong foundation for a permanent development in our country's political history. God willing.

Ayatollah Meshkini Expresses Views on Iranian Majles Elections

LD0402114096 Tehran IRNA in English 0911 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 4, IRNA — Speaker of the Council of Experts and Qom Friday prayer leader, Ayatollah 'Ali Meshkini, expressing his view on the forthcoming Majlis elections, said that representing people in Majlis is a demanding and responsible task, reported the morning daily JOMHURI ESLAMI Sunday.

"Therefore, the Majlis deputies should fear God, be sincere and committed to the Islamic revolution and Velayat-e Faqih, and not self-interested. While in Majlis, they should try to enforce the Islamic laws and precepts," the paper further quoted him as having said.

Referring to the exalted status of Majlis in the Islamic society, the speaker pointed out that the people's fate is sealed in the parliament, where the trend of society toward prosperity and salvation is initiated.

Ayatollah Meshkini viewed Majlis as a strong barrier to the enemies' cultural and political onslaughts on the Iranian nation. He further described the massive participation in the March 8 elections for the 270-seat Majlis as the key to foiling the enemies' plots. The ayatollah called on people to fulfil their task in this regard.

He asked the nation to vote for those candidates who have demonstrated their capability and efficiency in different social and political arenas and are practically committed to Islam and Velayat- e Faqih.

Qom friday prayer leader concluded by stressing that ignoring the above criteria is a sin and betrayal to Islam and the people.

Iran's Karrubi Hails Emergence of Khedmatgozaran-e Sazandegi Group

LD0302152896 Tehran IRNA in English 1058 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 3, IRNA — Former Majles speaker, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi, supported the group came to be known as Khedmatgozaran-e Sazandegi [Servants of Reconstruction] and predicted that the composition of the fifth term of the Majles will be in their favor, reported the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' Saturday.

Karrubi, told the paper, "the representatives from Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association], Khedmatgozaran-e Sazandegi or Group-16, left-wingers and independents will enter the Majles after the March 8 elections." He also told the paper that appearance of the group in the election scene added to the vigor and excitement of the entire process.

Karrubi, secretary general of Majma'-e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez (MRM) [Militant Clerics Society], stressed

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that presence of the group at the elections should be considered "a good omen" saying they are "revolutionary forces, faithful to the system and servants of the people." He added that the candidates should "show sound behavior" in their election campaign and "avoid personal bickering or insults."

Iranian Candidate on Need For Expertise in Majles

LD0502141496 Tehran IRNA in English 1255 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 5, IRNA — After four terms of parliamentary elections, people are fully aware of the special significance of the Majlis in the Islamic Republic and joyfully participate in the elections, the morning daily 'IRAN NEWS' today quoted a parliamentary candidate as saying. "These days people regard Majlis deputies as their representatives in that assembly for controlling the country, and this is manifest when they speak to the people or answer their questions," Majid Valizadeh Khajeshahi said.

Valizadeh, a secondary school instructor at Hashtrud, East Azarbaijan province, added: "Besides the qualifications prescribed in the constitution, I believe a deputy must be an expert in a specific field, because today's world is not a simple world and consists of 30 to 40 diffeent nationalities."

On the other hand, he further added, a parliamentarian should have a broad perspective on different subjects to fully understand the issues raised in the parliament and thus recommend proper solutions. He warned the people to avoid those candidates who chant alluring slogans or make a show of their money and property to attract more votes.

As for important issues to be carefully considered in the Majlis, he referred to the economic condition of the people, particularly the vulnerable masses, education for the youth and stable economic growth.

Iranian Paper Calls For 'Healthy Competition' in Election Campaign

NC0202134396 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 23 Jan 96 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "Healthy Competition"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently, public interest in the elections began increasing more and more and the population is gradually preparing itself for entry into the campaign phase. Until now there has been no news about the names of the candidates, something which is very normal. Meanwhile, new friction has emerged recently that appears to be slightly abnormal.

Some of the officials of the system, without stating their names or ranks, have declared their stand on the elections in a joint statement as prominent personalities, and, while expressing their own views, have called on the people to be vigilant and to cast their votes responsibly. This has led to friction, and objections by some in the Majles and other circles, and, namely, in some of the newspapers, which calls for comment.

There is no doubt that no one has the right to exploit his position and post in the Islamic Republic and propagandize in favor of one person over another, or to put forth the names of candidates, with is an illegal action that should be opposed and even confronted. But doesn't an official of the system, as an ordinary citizen, have the right to express his views and state his personal opinion on the elections, on sensitive conditions in the country today, and on the large and small needs of society both today and in the future? Not only does the law not forbid such an action, but such expertly expressed opinions elevate the people's alertness and make voters regard and analyze matters more profoundly and should therefore be encouraged.

Here it is necessary to underline the serious point that each and every member of the nation, irrespective of his position and the role he plays in how the fifth Majles term will be formulated, should try to increase the enthusiasm of the campaign as much as possible. These activities should be directed by the various groups, organizations, and people toward a "healthy competition" in which differing opinions are not rejected, but favorably received. Such enthusiasm manifests the healthiness of society and the political maturity of the people. It also is a sign of political-social vivacity and verve in the country.

The esteemed speaker of the Majles has, in the past few weeks, called on all the political and even guild organizations for active participation in the fifth Majles elections. He has very rightly expressed worries to each and every citizen and to groups to alertly act according to their duties and responsibilities, so that past experiences such as those at the beginning of the era of the Constitutional Movement are not repeated, and popular and revolutionary forces are not set aside. And now a group of officials of the system, who are not members of any organization as such, have entered the scene and are calling on the people for an alert presence at the elections. Such approaches should be welcomed so that others will also enthusiastically enter the scene.

Unfortunately, the first group to respond to the call by the Majles speaker has been criticized. Everyone should know that criticizing someone, sticking labels on someone, branding people as being legal or illegal, or

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working against one person or another are unacceptable. We seriously advice that all these groups show more patience and self-restraint, and rest assured that they do not need to negate others in order to prove themselves. Throughout the past 17 years the people have come to know everything and everyone and they are alert enough not to be affected by "subversive propaganda" against one candidate or another.

Everyone should be an active presence in the elections. Everyone should act according to his responsibilities and do his best to encourage the people. No one should regard the collective entry of officials of the system into the elections pessimistically or regard this as an action against himself or his faction. As long as these officials do not use their administrative privileges in favor of anyone, they should be able to express themselves and state their positions. And it is not in the interest of society for people to exploit the tribune of the Majles or any other place for subversion against others or to upset the atmosphere that rules public opinion.

Safeguarding the interests of the revolution, the system, and the country are among our top priorities and it is in the interest of all for the fifth Majles elections to be carried out in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and be welcomed by all the people. Those who negate the presence of others have actually started anti- propaganda against their own faction and prove that it is only with the absence of others that they can survive.

The lofty dignity of the Majles and of the press is more valuable than becoming "propaganda artillery" for bombarding the rival factions and various groups, especially when all the factions and groups in question believe in Islam, in the revolution, in supreme jurisconsult, and are saying one thing—that is, they are calling for the people's enthusiastic participation in the elections.

The issuing of declarations, even if contrary to the objectives of a specific group or faction, is not considered to be an illegal act unless the faction that claims responsibility considers only itself to be working within the framework of law—something which is definitely unacceptable. Everyone should be on the scene and exert all efforts for healthy competition in the elections and do whatever is necessary to elevate the alertness of the people within the framework of a healthy campaign; and they should rest assured that the people are alert, that it is the people who have the last say in the fifth term elections, and that ultimately they will make the decision that they want. At any rate, it is to the systems benefit for everyone to respect these interests.

Role of Watchdog Organizations in Iranian Elections Viewed

NC0202142996 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 30 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Task of Screening Bodies Crucial in Majles Elections"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Registration of candidates for the 5th Majles begins today. All candidates and voters are well aware of the fact that the Majles enjoys a high status in the Iranian political system.

It is necessary for the candidates, organizations in charge of evaluating the eligibility of candidates, and the voters to keep a few points in mind.

The organizations in charge of examining the eligibility of candidates, especially the Guardians' Council of the Constitution, should adhere to the rules in their evaluation. None of the screening bodies is allowed to take sides with a candidate while evaluating his or her eligibility. So long as a candidate fulfills the conditions set by the Constitution for a Majles candidacy, personal tastes and group affiliations must not influence the examiners' judgment.

The Majles must be a true representative of our nation. Therefore, candidates from different strata should be allowed to run for it. When nominations are cleared, people should feel free to elect or reject them. The task of the screening bodies is one of the most crucial in the process of elections. Impartiality of the evaluating teams will prepare a congenial ground for a healthy election.

The candidates on their part can help create an atmosphere for a healthy election. Election campaign is a basic right of every candidate. But the candidates should bear in mind that empty promises for the sake of victory is a disservice to the nation. Moreover, during the campaign no candidate should try to make his entry into the Majles through tarnishing the image of rival candidates.

Our people are mature enough in distinguishing good from evil. If a candidate enters the election fray with the sincere aim of serving the nation, voters will cast their ballots in favor of that candidate.

Of course, voters should look at past records of candidates, on the one hand, and their present approach to the main issues of economic development and social justice on the other. Commitment of the candidates to economic development and social justice can work as a guiding torch for voters in electing their representatives for the 5th Majles.

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Iranian Editorial on Need for 'Independent' Candidates

NC0202155696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 28 Jan 96 p 1

[Editorial: "A Balanced Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

We are on the eve of registering volunteers for entry into the Majles. Perhaps some have decided to contest the elections by now. However, today we are addressing those who may not have made any definite decision but have all the necessary requisites of a Majles deputy.

There can be no doubt of the lofty and privileged status of the Majles in defining executive policies for the present and future. Naturally, those who should be in the forefront of this trend are those who possess the necessary qualifications for acceptance of the position of a Majles deputy and feel that they are eligible.

These persons have a clear stance and concept about national issues, a constructive viewpoint and perception of qualitative upgrading of the system, and a superb understanding of the subtleties and complexities of administrative operations. Those who have solutions and comments regarding these issues should be willing to accept the responsibilities of a deputy and should contest the elections for entry into the Majles.

The groups and associations also have a very clear responsibility. They should convince and encourage their supporters to have an effective and active presence on the election scene, so the elections can be convened with added fervor and enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, the Guardians' Council should also—by adopting a clear and sensible stance—create conducive conditions for eliciting greater trust among the public. The spokesman of the Council explained to the Friday congregation in Tehran that membership in parties and groups is not a criterion and the Guardians' Council will not take this into consideration. It is the qualifications of the candidates which will be assessed, without any regard for their group leanings.

This is a favorable and sensible stance, which indicates a principled approach by the Guardians' Council, that will be complementary to its appraisal of qualifications—which should include practical commitment to the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by supreme jurisconsult]. The great leader has given very clear and lucid guidance which, if used as practical criteria, would eliminate all possible difficulties in this regard.

During the fourth Majles elections he stated: "It has become common to describe even the slightest difference of opinion as 'contrary to the Velayat-e Faqih.' One does not know why if some remark is made, it is interpreted as being antithetical to the Velayat-e Faqih. However, there is no doubt that being opposed to the Velayat-e Faqih implies opposition to the most basic and fundamental principle and pillar of the Islamic Republic of Iran's system, and has much deeper meaning."

The essence of the exhortations by the great leader is that everyone cannot be branded as opposed to the Velayat-e Faqih because of some mere mention or pinned with similar labels at random. A correct approach by the Guardians' Council and those that it has selected would eliminate all kinds of disillusionment and guarantee healthy elections.

Another point with regard to the elections is the entry of competent deputies who are effective and efficient, but do not have enough financial support for financing their election campaign. Of course, this is not a crime and lack of funds should not prevent them from contesting the elections. Naturally, a solution would be that the people and revolutionary forces enter the fray and meet their campaign needs with an effective publicity campaign to enable them to enter the Majles.

Our Majles needs efficient and independent individuals who are not affiliated with any particular trend or faction and have independence of thought and action. An independent and efficient Majles can only display its practical capacity to the maximum when it is balanced and is not monopolized by any particular faction. Experience has shown that monopolistic predominance by one faction— regardless of what faction it may be—undermines the dynamism and efficiency of the Majles and to a certain extent its independence.

Naturally at this stage efficient, sincere, and independent forces should make the ultimate decision themselves for an active presence on the scene and enter into the elections seriously. The next stage would be for the people and revolutionary forces to provide effective support for the independent and competent candidates. This would help pave the way for their induction into the Majles, so that the fifth Majles will have a balanced and cohesive structure that enables it to serve the objectives of Islam, the revolution, and the country.

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Iran: 'Puppet Show' of 'So-Called Majles Election' Assailed

NC0302111096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1500 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Station commentary: "The Puppet Show of the Elections and the People's Indifference"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the Iranian regime's program for the display that is the fifth elections of the clerics' Majles, would-be deputies of the so-called Islamic Majles can register in the next few days.

For some time the propaganda machine of the clerics' regime has been working for this puppet show, disseminating its horrible propaganda with a great fanfare, just as it did in previous terms.

It is not unlikely that clerics coming to power would use various propaganda tactics to try and deceive people and dupe sincere individuals with their two-faced hypocrisy. They sought to distort the reality and to intensify suppression and (?repression) while talking about the country's freedom and security. By rigging the elections they try to project the puppet show as real elections in which the people are free to stand as candidates without any individual or institution standing in their way and free to vote for their chosen candidates.

Past puppet shows have proved that not everyone can become candidates or play a basic role in nominating and electing their candidates. Who in Iran does not know that under the domination of the clerics, only those who are affiliated with the regime or who would not dare oppose the regime and disrupt their imaginary visions can become candidates?

Once the regime [words indistinct] these individuals and puts them through a filter several times, it approves several puppets in a calculated manner, forces the people to elect one of those favored by the regime, and rejects the rest.

If this reality is considered the first principle of every rigged, so-called Majles election, something that has been seen in every previous election, the people must have realized that the same will be true of the next elections. The results of previous puppet shows have made them more despondent and indifferent; the regime's beating the drums of false propaganda will have no effect on them.

While the masses and those who have risen up in the political arena of resistance and struggle against the regime, in particular, have never believed the so-called Majles deputies are different from the regime, since they are affiliated with it, why was it that, against the background of past terms of the clerics' Majles, foreign media viewed the results of the so-called elections positively? They believed that if the so-called elections could undermine the hardline faction and pave the way for the election of so-called moderates in favor of Hashemi-Rafsanjani then Iran would acquire a more favorable bias that could be relied upon. They believed that the chapter of [words indistinct] and casting aside thoughts of extremism in favor of amicable coexistence with the rest of the world had opened during this regime's political life and that Majles support of Hashemi-Rafsanjani would pave the way for numerous changes and developments to the benefit of people and countries everywhere.

But four years on the people and the various countries along with the media that created an immense clamor over the so-called elections witnessed no change or development by the regime toward moderation and no attempt to distance itself from its hardline policies. The regime's foreign and domestic policies became even more repressive and unpleasant.

Iranian Press Urged To Avoid 'Disruptive' Issues During Election

LD0402120296 Tehran IRNA in English 1051 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 4, IRNA — Deputy minister of culture and islamic guidance in charge of press and propagation affairs, 'Ali Akbar Asha'ri, called on the Iranian press on Sunday to refrain from raising controversial and disruptive issues while the forthcoming Majlis elections are in process so that the country's sound political atmosphere will be preserved.

He noted that publicity campaigns play a significant part in ensuring validity of the elections, and that the limits of such activities are clearly defined by the election laws. The laws, he added, also set up the framework for the activities of the press.

Asha'ri went on to say that those political groups which have announced their intention to take part in the March 8 elections have their own dailies or periodicals. However, it is incumbent on them to comply with the laws of elections and the press.

The deputy minister concluded by stressing that, based on the election laws, the dailies and periodicals belonging to the ministries and other governmental organizations and any institution that uses country's general budget, are not permitted to write for or against any parliamentary candidate, even in form of an advertisement.

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Call to 'Heterodox' To Participate in Iran's Majles Discussed

NC0502101996 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 21 Jan 96 p 14

[Commentary by Behruz Saqi: "Put Up for Auction!"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Recent discussions about the elections and the Majles have been so heated they might have burned people! This morning, perusing the press, I came across something very surprising.

The paper said: "Everyone, even the heterodox, can become Majles candidates if they have a good record."

I have nothing to do with whoever said this, because recently, unlike anything in the past, especially the past [Majles] term, such remarks have been heard flowing from the mouths of secondary officials and others. During the past couple of months everyone has considered himself to be a host for others!, inviting people to come to the Majles. It is as if the Majles is up for auction. Some deputies from the previous term—despite their opinions that they were the only competent and committed people to be assigned by the public—have assured others: "If your competence was rejected in the past term, it matters not. Try again!" [passage omitted]

Have the criteria of the revolution changed or have the heterodox started to think differently?! What we glean from the law is that the Majles deputies should, at least, be faithful to the Constitution, in which the supreme jurisconsult is considered to be the loftiest principle. Will these heterodox and liberal gentlemen—most of them fed morally, materially, and so on from outside and who are resorting to various means to harm Islamic principles and work against our sanctities—be faithful to these principles?

We can get a clearer picture only from two angles. The first is that such generosity proves the strength of the system, despite all the mischief of world arrogance and these heterodox elements. And the second is that the word heterodox is, perhaps, used in a different context from that in which it is usually used. If those who use this word think heterodox means a person who thinks differently but in line with Islam, the revolution, and the imam's line, not hostility toward Islam and the Islamic Revolution and ridiculing all the values that the people accept, then we too have no objection.

There is concern that recent calls may lead to an invitation to those who do not respect the boundaries outlined with the blood of the martyrs and to the unfit coming to power. May this not be so.

Iranian Candidates' 'Commitment,' 'Expertise' Stressed

NC0502140096 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 20 Jan 96 p 2

[Commentary by Hoseyn Shari'atmadari: "Some Points on Commitment and Expertise"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] When the issue of the special characteristics of Majles deputies arises, "commitment" and "expertise" are stressed at the top the list of what people expect from their candidates. Since this is a logical and popular view, few can doubt the need for these special characteristics in the campaigns. But while "commitment" and "expertise" have been defined, they need to be assessed in terms of "views" and "actions," because:

1. Expertise is a qualification and experts enjoy greater efficiency and know-how than nonexperts but the duty of the Majles is to tend to legislation in line with religious and revolutionary beliefs. Those experts who enter the Majles should be faithful to religious and revolutionary values. We should not ignore the important point that the experts' commitment should be their most outstanding characteristic. [passage omitted]

2. Although "commitment" means commitment to religious and revolutionary values, Majles deputies can shoulder their heavy and fateful responsibilities and serve the people only when their views on religious and revolutionary values conform with the people's. We do not mean that candidates with other outlooks on religious and revolutionary values should not stand. We mean that they should define what they mean by "commitment" in their campaign and the people should be able to assess these candidates' performance and be sure that their views on commitment conform with the people's views. Some people consider compromise with America an Islamic and revolutionary duty and could list many reasons for this view from a canonical and logical position. Or there may be those who define deputyship as sitting back idly, not confronting the enemies of religion, and not confronting the people. These people—according to the imam, may his soul be sanctified—have a mistaken view, not only of "rule," but also of "religion." Or they could be people who seek "development" at any price, even by downplaying religious and revolutionary values. To avoid electing such candidates, we should have a clear definition of "commitment" and recognize the "pure" from the "impure." The people have shown that they see "commitment" as the leader of the revolution saw it in his list of "should's" and "should not's." The least we can expect from those who see it differently is an explanation of their use of the word. Naturally the people's votes will count.

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MRM Candidates May Contest Iranian Election as Individuals

LD0602121496 Tehran IRNA in English 1148 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 6, IRNA — Member of the central council of the Majma'-e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez (MRM) [Militant Clerics Society], Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Musavi-Lari, has said certain members of MRM might run for the March 8 parliamentary elections individually, reported the Persian daily 'IRAN' Tuesday. He said in an interview with the daily that some of political establishments might include the names of these MRM members in their lists of candidates. MRM will not offer a list of candidates in Tehran or other cities as a political group, he said.

Musavi-Lari rejected any coalition with other political groups saying that such discouraging issues should not be raised because of the need for people's participation in the Majlis polls. The right wing intends to maintain its majority in the 270-seat Majlis, using all means at its disposal, he added.

With the emergence of Khedmatgozaran Sazandegi [Servants of Reconstruction] (group of 16 senior government officials), the right wing would most probably lose its majority in the Majlis. If the Khedmatgozaran would include renowned persons in its list of candidates, a considerable number of them are expected to enter the Majlis. He said he has not registered for the fifth Majlis elections.

Pakistan

Pakistani Spokesman Denies Supply of Nuclear Technology by China

BK0602062196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has denied a Washington press report that China has exported components of nuclear weapon technology to Pakistan. A spokesman of the Pakistan Embassy in Washington while describing the allegation as baseless referred to similar earlier charges which proved false.

Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif Says Review of Nuclear Policy Needed

BK0502050696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Speaking at a meet the press program in Rawalpindi, the PML [Pakistan Muslim League]-Nawaz chief, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, has said Pakistan's nuclear policy should be framed upholding the nation's self-respect. He said the time has come that Pakistan should review the existing nuclear policy and adopt honorable stand regarding the nuclear program. He said Pakistan has been subjected to discriminatory treatment under the Pressler law, while no action has been taken against India for its nuclear ambitions.

Pakistani Minister Discusses Missile Technology, Afghan Policy

BK0502082096 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 5 Feb 96 pp 1,12

[Associated Press of Pakistan report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said that India has forced Pakistan to develop its missile technology, keeping in view the parameters of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to ensure it security and defence.

Talking to newsmen at a briefing here at State Guest House Sunday, the foreign minister said Pakistan never wanted to enter into arms race but India had initiated missile race in the area which had forced Pakistan to develop capabilities in different fields to strengthen its defence.

The foreign minister said Pakistan had clarified that Indian advantage in arms race would not be in favour of peace in the region and recent Prithvi missile test has created tension in South Asia.

He said Pakistan would not allow India to take any advantage from its missile race and take all appropriate measures to strengthen its defence at all costs.

He said there could be many options for India to take benefit from the recent experiment of missile, one of them was to secure a seat in the UN Security Council.

Referring to the decision of India to hold elections in occupied Kashmir, Asif said such elections were not the solution to the problem, rather it would further aggravate the situation and disturb the cause of Kashmir.

He said that India only wanted to hold election to muster support of Western countries in the name of democracy, but according to Pakistan's point of view, election process was not the solution to the issue. He said that as there would be least participation in the election by the people of occupied area therefore the so-called election would not give due right to the people living there.

He said a number of India sponsored groups had been involved in the killing of Kashmiris to put blame on the freedom fighters to check their activities. He said RAW (Research and Analysts Wing [Intelligence Agency])

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had been involved in the disturbance of situation in the occupied Kashmir with a mission to create confusion in the Kashmir movement and it was proof of constant insurgency there.

Asif said Indian forces were intentionally involved in increasing tension along the Line of Control through various moves.

He said test of Prithvi missile was a great threat to the security of Pakistan as it would provide only three minutes time to Pakistan to get prepared for defence. Pakistan cannot remain exposed to this danger and has to take effective steps to ensure its security and defence, he added.

He said had Pakistan allowed the inspection of its nuclear installation, then it would have got all 71 F-16 planes from the United States but Pakistan did not allow the inspection and faced the bitter consequences.

He said Pakistan had decided to stick to its nuclear policy sacrificing the F-16's. Regarding purchase of Mirage aircraft from France, the minister said negotiates were still going on and Pakistan would certainly get these planes.

About Afghanistan, Asif said Pakistan wanted unity of Afghanistan without giving preference to any Afghan leadership and supported a broadbased government according to the UN Security Council resolutions. He said Pakistan Policy on Afghanistan was independent of its relations with Iran. He said Pakistan was the most affected country as a result of Afghanistan's internal strife. It was Pakistan, which helped achieve Peshawar accord, Islamabad accord and Makkah accord. "If Kabul government is not ready to reach any consensus on power sharing with other groups and seeking a military solution, what fault Pakistan has," he asked.

He said Pakistan had no preferences as it supported a solution based on the three principles stated above. He categorically denied that Pakistan had been supporting Taleban. Nobody can prove, that it has given even a single bullet to Taleban as a support," he asserted.

He said that UN envoy Mahmoud Mestiri had held a number of meetings in the recent past with Pakistan president, prime minister and himself (Asif). "We have suggested to him that ground and population realities should be accepted." There are Tajiks, Uzbeks, Pakhtoons and other ethnic groups, he said and added facts are to be accepted.

On Afghanistan, he said Pakistan supported formation of defence commission and interim security commission with representatives from all Afghan factions, adding then an interim government be installed as transition to a permanent political solution through peaceful means. He said, Pakistan had suggested to Mestiri that all heavy weapons should be taken out of Kabul and a neutral force be deployed before the formation of the interim government.

Asif said Pakistan had no differences with Iran on Afghan policy. He said due to non-interference by Pakistan in Afghanistan, Indian interference has increased the regarding supply of gas from Iran to India via Pakistan, he said Iran had told Pakistan that it would lay pipeline up to Pakistan border, and the rest of work would not be its business.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Says Government Wants Unity in Afghanistan

BK0502050096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said Pakistan wants unity in Afghanistan without giving preference to any Afghan leadership and supports a broad-based government. Briefing senior journalists in Lahore yesterday, the foreign minister said Pakistan is the most affected country as a result of internal strife in Afghanistan. He said it was Pakistan which helped achieve Peshawar accord, Islamabad accord, and Mecca accord. Now, it is not the fault of Pakistan if Kabul government is not ready to reach any consensus for power sharing with other groups and seeking a military solution.

The foreign minister said Pakistan has no differences with Iran on Afghan policy. He said due to noninterference of Pakistan in Afghanistan, Indian interference has increased there.

More on Pakistani President's Remarks on Kashmir, Afghanistan

BK0502152296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said there is no military solution possible to resolve the Kashmir dispute and only talks held the key to the problem. He was speaking at a dinner hosted in his honor by Pakistan's ambassador to Switzerland, Mr. (Zia Ispahani), in Zurich last night. It was attended by Swiss Government officials and businessmen and bankers as well. He said although Pakistan and India were not at war with each other, but their relations were strained because of the Kashmir issue. He said Pakistan is willing to engage in meaningful talks with India at any forum or bilateral or multilateral mediation to resolve the dispute peacefully. He said we have been

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urging some common friends of both India and Pakistan like the USA to play a role and get us around the table.

Referring to Afghanistan, he said Pakistan has been host to over 3 million refugees from that country. He said we want peace in Afghanistan. He said even today 1.4 million refugees from Afghanistan remain in Pakistan, while international help has been totally cut off.

The president said the business leaders, industrialists, and investors from Switzerland to come forward to Pakistan to have a look at its investment opportunities. [sentence as heard] He explained to them the economic and financial reforms made by the government to liberalize trade and privatization and deregulation process.

The Swiss secretary of state for economic affairs, Mr. (Franz Blancard), speaking on the occasion, said his country will remain a major player in foreign investment in Pakistan. His country, he said, is ready and willing to help address issues Pakistan was facing. We have fully allowed and encouraged our private sector to invest in Pakistan, he said.

Pakistan Seeks Extradition of MQM Members From Saudi Arabia

BK0402090296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 4 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by "Our Monitoring Desk"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After the arrest of the accused involved in Riyadh bomb blast and handing him over to Saudi government Pakistan government has requested to arrest those working for MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] in Saudi Arabia and send them to Pakistan.

According to confirmed reports, the accused involved in Riyadh bomb blast was arrested in Lahore on the pointation of Saudi Government two weeks back. Before handling this accused over to Saudi government, Pakistan's Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar visited Riyadh and requested the Saudi government to arrest those MQM men who are here on the pretext of Umra [minor pilgrimage] and jobs. He told the Saudi government that those MQM men are involved in terrorist activities in Pakistan hence they should be handed over to Pakistan government.

According to the reports and MQM sources, a list of those persons working for MQM in Saudi Arabia has been provided by Pakistan government to Saudi Ambassador in Pakistan and in the light of this list, some MQM office-bearers in Saudi Arabia have been arrested.

The MQM men are being interrogated.

Pakistan: MQM Leader Urges Workers To Go Into Hiding 'Immediately'

BK0302133396 (Internet) MQM NEWS in English 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, January 24, 1996 — Quaid-e- Tehrik [movement leader] Altaf Hussain instructed all the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] workers to go in to hiding immediately. He said that my worker's lives is dearer to me than anything else. While reacting strongly on the arrest of MQM's acting In Charge of Lyari sector Mohammad Yaseen and five other workers, he said that government is not concerned with the fate of the country and doesn't care much about innocent Muhajirs. He said that government is bent upon eliminating Muhajirs for generations. He further said that, it is quite evident that one cannot trust Benazir Zardari [Bhutto] and her group of crooks. He said that, there it is necessary that all the workers must go in hiding immediately and protect themselves against the state brutality.

Government troops recently arrested MQM workers Mohammad Yaseen son of Mohammad Murad (Acting In Charge Lyari Sector), Mohammad Zakir son of Mohammad Zaheer, Musharaf Ali son of Owais Ali (In Charge Unit 30), Mahmood (Sector Member Lyari) and Nasir Ajmeri. He appealed to the Chief Justice of Supreme Court Of Pakistan to take necessary actions to protect the lives of arrested MQM workers.

Pakistan's Bhutto Says Islamabad To Work for Regional Peace

BK0602050696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto has declared that Pakistan will continue to work for regional peace and security, including nuclear security, but will never bargain over the fate of Kashmiri Muslims. Recalling the unfortunate incident of Indian rocket attack on forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir killing several faithfuls offering Juma [Friday] prayers, she said our people are outraged by this atrocity and rightly demand that it should never be repeated. The prime minister was addressing an iftar [fast breaking] dinner in Islamabad last evening which she hosted for Muslim diplomats. She said Bosnia-Herzegovina has shown that despite massive sufferings, the collective voice of the ummah [Islamic community] cannot be ignored by the world community.

Ms. Benazir Bhutto drew attention of the Muslim diplomats toward Indian military buildup. Against its own statements, India is using all its diplomatic skills to prevent a zero yield Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

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She made it clear that the Indian nuclear and missile program are to dominate the entire region where several Islamic countries are located. She warned that if recent testing of nuclear-capable Prithvi missile is Pakistan specific, India is also working on a missile having a range of 2,500 kilometers. Its program also includes development of intercontinental ballistic missile.

The prime minister asked the Muslim world to meet external threats and internal problems and work for advancement in the field of science with courage. Either, we equip ourselves for the next century or accept subordination with hundreds of thousands of fellow Muslims relegated to a state of great material and cultural impoverishment. Ms. Benazir Bhutto also called for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East restoring rights of the Palestinians.

Strike, Rallies Held in Pakistan To Express Solidarity With Kashmir

BK0502145696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Complete strike was observed throughout the country and Azad Jammu and Kashmir [AJK] today to express solidarity with the Kashmiri brethren struggling for liberation from Indian slavery. All business centers, commercial establishments, public and private offices, banks, and educational institutions were closed and traffic was off the road.

Meetings and rallies took place throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir to condemn the Indian atrocities against the struggling people of occupied Kashmir. A big rally organized by Jammu and Kashmir Citizens Forum for Liberation began outside Parliament House in Islamabad this morning. The rally on its way to Rawalpindi was led by among others by the chairman, Parliamentary Kashmir Committee, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan; the AJK president, Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan; and leaders of several political parties in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. They included former president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Retired Major General Mohammad Hayat Khan; the leader of the house in the Senate, Malik Mohammad Qasim; and the minister for population, Mr. J. Salik. [passage omitted]

In occupied Kashmir, a crippling strike was observed in a spirited response to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's call. All business centers, offices, educational institutions, courts, and banks were closed and every type of transport remained suspended. Reports of Indian forces' atrocities and killings of innocent people have been received from many places in the held valley.

Pakistan's Leghari Calls For 'Honorable Resolution' of Kashmir Issue

BK0502051996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has reiterated that Pakistan wants an early and honorable resolution of Kashmir issue through negotiations and peaceful means to ensure peace and development in the region. He was addressing a dinner hosted by the Pakistan ambassador to Switzerland, Mr. (M.G. Ispahani), in his honor in Zurich last night.

The president said the only solution of the Kashmir issue is through implementation of the UN resolutions which call for a free and fair plebiscite to determine the future of Kashmiri people. He urged India to agree to a peaceful resolution of the issue, as it cannot resolve it militarily. He said Pakistan wants India to honor its commitments it made before the world body for holding the plebiscite. Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari regretted that all efforts of Pakistan to resolve Kashmir issue peacefully did not get positive Indian response.

He spoke of the Indian brutalities against innocent Kashmiris and called upon the international community to exert pressure on India to stop its massive violations of human rights in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The president also made it clear that Pakistan is opposed to any arms race and expressed concern over Indian missile program.

Talking on the internal situation, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said there was a complete consensus among political leaders on vital national issues, including Kashmir, and improvement of the national economy and welfare of the masses. About Karachi situation, the president said the government is making determined and solid efforts to restore normalcy and eliminate terrorism in Karachi.

Pakistan: Kashmiri Group Vows To Continue 'Struggle' Against India

BK0402132296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC], in a statement in Srinagar on the eve of solidarity day tomorrow, has forcefully reiterated the Kashmiris' resolve to continue their struggle against the Indian subjugation. The statement — issued after an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Council of the APHC chaired by the chairman, Mir Waiz Omar Farooq — said India has launched conspiracy to murder political leaders. The conference appealed to the United

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Nations and the world community to act urgently to dissuade India from the genocide of Kashmiris and allow them to exercise their basic rights of self-determination. The conference once again expressed great concern over the recent killing of nine Kashmiri freedom fighters in Kupwara.

Pakistan: Compromise on Kashmiri Self-Determination Ruled Out

BK0602092196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The acting president, Mr. Wasim Sajjad, has said the successful countrywide strike has reflected complete unity among the people for the Kashmir cause. It has also conveyed a strong message to India that there could be no compromise on the right of self-determination for the Kashmiris. He was talking to newsmen at a reception in Islamabad last evening. The acting president urged India to settle the Kashmir problem in accordance with the UN resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Pakistani Ministers Speak on Karachi Situation; Terrorists Caught

BK0302102196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Retired Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar has said that the government has been successful in its efforts to control lawlessness in Karachi and will achieve full control soon. Speaking to newsmen at a Ramadan fast- breaking party in Karachi yesterday, he said nobody was illegally killed in Karachi and those killed in police encounters were habitual criminals. The interior minister said the government will adopt all necessary security measures to protect people and athletes in all the cricket stadiums throughout the country, especially in Karachi. He said security measures in Karachi stadium have been tightened and police have been directed to shoot on sight any terrorist trying to commit acts of terrorism around the stadium.

Professor N.D. Khan Federal Minister for Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs has said if the Altaf Group ensures that terrorism ceases in Karachi, the government will halt police action there. Addressing a Ramadan fast-breaking party in Karachi yesterday, he said if peace is maintained in the city for six months, the government will hold local body elections and the Altaf Group will be offered a share in power. He said the Altaf Group should end the stalemate in negotiations, because negotiations are the only solution to the situation.

Police arrested two alleged Altaf Group terrorists in Karachi and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition based on a clue they provided. During interrogation, the culprits said that their other accomplices were hiding in a school. The police besieged the school, but the terrorists managed to flee under cover of darkness. The police recovered three rocket launchers, three rockets, nine Kalashnikovs, seven pistols, three light machine guns, 16 magazines, and more than 500 rounds of ammunition for Kalashnikov and light machine guns from an underground dry tank at the school.

Pakistani Army Denies Allegations of Alleged Coup Plotter's Torture

BK0502084496 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 5 Feb 96 pp 1,4

[Report by THE MUSLIM reporter in Islamabad]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Feb. 4 — The Pakistan Army has denied the allegations that Maj. Gen. Zahir Abbasi, leader of the alleged coup plotter, was abducted or being tortured.

The army also denied that witnesses were being tortured. The reply further stated that allegations against the petitioner's husband that he was under "close arrest", were not correct and also denied that any of his rights or privileges had been infringed.

Replying to allegation that Maj. Gen. Abbasi was arrested without any warrant, it was stated that no warrant of arrest was required for taking an accused into custody. If further stated that all privileges and facilities were still being enjoyed by Maj. Gen. Abbasi and his family which included full pay, government accommodation, the continuation of the facility of staff car, civil as well as military telephone installed at his residence and the services of batman [as published], etc.

The statement further stated that Maj. Gen. Abbasi was not subjected to criminal acts and none of the interrogators used insulting language or desecrated any quotation from the Holy Quran.

It stated that convening the Field General Court Martial, FGCM, was lawful in accordance with Section 84(a), 87 and PAA Rule 135. It further stated that there was no need to bring him before his commanding officer as his arrest was ordered by the chief of the Army Staff.

It further stated that petitioner's husband was not maligned by release of statements to the press by the Federal Government. It denied that such statements have been made to turn the public opinion or opinion of officers against the accused. Such statements were made to disclose the facts so as to apprise the nation about

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the situation and to forestall speculative reporting in the press.

It further denied that the entire army had become party to the proceedings against Maj. Gen. Abbasi and his co-accused. All the members of the Court have taken oath to administer justice without partiality, favour or affection. The petitioner's husband was being given a fair trial and he had been afforded full opportunity to defend his case and prove his innocence.

The reply further stated that Maj. Gen. Abbasi's attachment by the Adjutant General with any formation/unit is covered under instruction 77B(2) of the Army Regulations Vol.II (Instruction) — 1991 Edition.

The room where the petitioner's husband is lodged is carpeted, has a bed set, chairs, table and lighting arrangement. A toilet is nearby with all the modern facilities. It is not mandatory that the petitioner's husband should have been placed under the escort of an officer of senior or equal rank.

The facility of telephone is available. Facilities to communicate with his family members and defence counsel are also available to him. The statement further denied that the summery of evidence has been tampered with. After an accused pleads "not guilty" to a charge against him, the evidence of witness is recorded afresh by the court where the defence is provided full opportunity to cross-examine them. Therefore, the petitioner's husband was not handicapped in the defence, it was stated.

Meanwhile the Supreme Court which issued notice to the chief of Army Staff in the coup case was informed on Sunday it had no jurisdiction to look into cases relating to members of the Armed Forces. [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan Police Official: 34 Arrested in Connection With Bombing

BK0602112996 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The bomb which devastated Sri Lanka's main financial center last week weighed around 400 kg, twice as much as believed earlier, police said on Monday. The bomb, made up of a mixture of plastic explosives and dynamite, was packaged with bags of rice in a truck that was rammed against the 11-story Central Bank building in downtown Colombo on Wednesday [31 January], police said. This is by far the (?biggest) bomb used in an attack in Colombo. Acting Police Inspector General Mitra Arya Sinha also said (?big) parts of the truck bomb had been recovered by forensic experts. He said that a total of 34 people, including two men believed to be directly involved in the attack, have been arrested and are being interrogated. Police have recorded statements from more than 60 witnesses to the bombing.

Sri Lankan Editorial Lauds Public Response to Bombing

BK0302120996 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 3 Feb 96

[Editorial: "Magnificent Response" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It was one of their finest hours in recent times. The general public rising as one man to help the victims of Wednesday's [31 January] shocking bomb blast is perhaps the brightest spot in a dark cloud which has descended on the country. Despite the wanton loss of life, the considerable destruction and pandemonium which reigned for a time, the "ordinary people" of this country rallied once again with their overwhelming kindness for which they are well known. Tiger brutality and savagery did not freeze them.

Within minutes of the blast, rescue operations began. People with little concern for their safety, the rescuers carried the dead and injured into buses, trucks and cars left at their disposal by owners who just didn't count the cost. There was hardly any need for direction and guidance.

Close on the heels of this edifying episode came the unsolicited blood donors. They stood patiently in line with only thought of the dead and dying.

There are also the invaluable services which are being rendered to the sick and dying by doctors, nurses and other relevant staff.

This barbaric act of the Tigers succeeded only in drawing out the innate magnanimity of the people. It was indeed a proud moment for the people.

The biggest challenge before the nation now is to see that this kind of tragedy does not happen again. This was the subject of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga's address to the nation. Although there would not be any question of giving in to terrorists on the part of the authorities or the peace-loving public, only a political solution will bring lasting peace to the country. The government's devolution package which holds out the promise of a just solution to the ethnic crisis, should be supported by all sections of the people if peace is to be restored.

The government's strategy is to isolate the Tigers from the Tamil community which is beginning to view with

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horror the self- destruction that is being caused by the megalomania of the Tiger leader. The President in her address to the nation reminded the people of her two-track commitment — to destroy the Tigers and at the same time to bring peace to a grieving nation. If this succeeds then as the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Professor G.L. Peiries has said it will be a greater victory than the liberation at Jaffna.

The Tiger savagery which the international community has begun to see vividly on their TV screens has drawn sympathy for Sri Lanka from across the globe. With the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] facing increasing international isolation while the war to eliminate the Tiger terrorists will be resumed with renewed vigour, the country must now get down to the job of devolving power to the periphery.

Sri Lankan President Stresses Efforts To End 'Terrible War'

BK0502123496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Gallantry awards were presented to service personnel at a ceremony held at the BMICH [Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall] in Colombo yesterday. Seven hundred sixty-four personnel received awards for bravery from President Chandrika Kumaratunga. [passage omitted]

Addressing the gathering, President Kumaratunga said that the government would persist in its efforts to successfully end this terrible war and find a political solution so that a similar situation would not arise in the country again. The entire society salutes the gallant soldiers who are fighting with scant regard for their lives for the sake of the country. The president said that she took this opportunity to salute these soldiers herself on behalf of the government and the nation. The greatest victory and honor the security forces could achieve is to bring this terrible war to successful conclusion so that a society could be built where all sections of the community could live with self-respect and due rights. Mrs. Kumaratunga said that she was confident that everybody in the Armed Forces will extend to the government the exemplary cooperation extended during the war and in resolving the problem. Normally only a handful heroes are found in a country, but the president said that it was gratifying to note that they were able to award such a large number of gallantry medals considering the size of the armed forces.

Sri Lankan Minister Says Devolution To 'Strengthen' Sovereignty

BK0502014596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 5 Feb 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prof. G. L. Peiris, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Deputy Minister of Finance said that the Government's Devolution Package, rather than dividing Sri Lanka would help to further strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He was speaking at a seminar on the devolution proposals attended by leaders and representatives of 22 trade unions held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute last Friday.

The seminar was organised by the Alliance of Trade Unions for National Unity and presided over by Mr. D.W. Subasinghe, Secretary of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation.

Prof. Peiris said that some people were raising doubts in the light of last Wednesday's bomb incidents, whether the government would go ahead with the devolution package. He wished to categorically state that the Government would not change its stand. While aiming at a political solution through this package we also continue military operations to defeat the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Prof. Peiris referred to the peace talks for which Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga took the initiative as soon as she assumed office as President. But the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] reneged on these talks and resumed the war after a ceasefire which lasted from January 6 to April 19 last years. Could any government with self-respect simply wait in such a situation.

War alone is not sufficient to solve this issue. A political solution is also necessary. Hence this devolution package towards achieving such a solution. They as trade unionists had a responsibility of giving the correct picture about these proposals. In every era in history many countries have witnessed workers having a broad outlook on national issues and not looking at such problems from a narrow angle. This is true of the workers even today. He (the Minister) was therefore confident that trade unionists would act wisely and take the right message to the people.

Many fear that the devolution proposals would result in the division of the country. There need be no such fears as these proposals rather than resulting in the division of the country would strengthen its sovereignty and

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territorial integrity. Sri Lanka will continue to be one country and one republic.

Under our constitution no Provincial Council [PC] would be able to break away from the centre by a referendum. Such a referendum would be illegal. Nor could it change its boundaries. These will be decided by the Central Government and if any PC acts in violation of the decisions of the Central Government, the President has the power to dissolve such a council.

Prof. Peiris said the devolution package provided for land distribution by PCs among the people of those provinces and that too should be done in proportion to the various races first in the district and then in the province. Under this set up there can be no injustice to the Sinhalese in the distribution of land in the North and East.

The proposals when implemented would also help equal distribution of wealth and resources to the provinces to manage their day to day affairs unlike now where a greater amount of money is spent to beautify a roundabout than what can be spent to solve a pressing problem in a remote province. This is because politicians and officials based in Colombo cannot see the problems in an outstation like, for example, Moneragala. This situation won't arise when power is devolved to the people of those areas who could then decide on their priorities.

Mr. Amarasiri Dodangoda, Minister of Co-operatives, Provincial Councils and Indigenous Medicine also spoke.

LTTE Official Doubts Sri Lankan Government Sincerity

BK0502123996 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Karikalan, deputy leader of the political wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE], has stated in Batticaloa that the People's Alliance government is not sincerely committed to resolving the problems of Tamils. The government does not want a lasting peace, it only wants to prolong the atmosphere of conflict. Referring to the symbolic laying down of arms stipulated by President Chandrika Kumaratunga as one of the preconditions for talks, Karikalan categorically stated that we will not lay down our arms at any cost until the security of Tamils is assured. Our objective is to achieve an independent Tamil Eelam. [passage omitted]

Foreign Countries Reportedly 'Blackballing' LTTE

BK0302124596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Many countries are now blackballing the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and clamping down on its activities. According to official sources quoted by LANKAPUVATH, intelligence reports indicate that Canada has now turned down a request by the LTTE's Jaffna-based adviser and spokesman Anton Balasingham to visit Canada. Earlier, that country rejected the visa application by London-based media spy Vasantaraja. Many of the European Union countries have tightened immigration laws to prevent LTTE activists from visiting the country.

Political analysts say that the LTTE is militarily weak and that it is resorting to brutally killing innocent civilians through suicide bomb attacks.

Sri Lankan Operational Headquarters Reports Naval Clash With LTTE

BK0402130696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defense today reported naval action against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] in the northern waters. It said in a press release that on Friday [2 February], naval troops at Mandaittivu Island detected three LTTE boats moving toward Kalmunai point from Poorasantivu Island in Jaffna Lagoon. The navy engaged with small arms fire and destroyed two terrorist boats completely. They recovered one boat with a stock of medicine, petrol cans, and cooked meals. The troops did not suffer any casualty.

LTTE Dispatch Details Offensive in Eastern Sri Lanka

BK0502124196 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam [LTTE] launched an offensive on a Sri Lankan military camp adjoining a jungle area in the east the day before yesterday. Sri Lankan defense circles reported that two persons were killed and four injured on their side in the attack that was carried out around 1830. It should be noted that this military camp was set up to protect Sinhalese settlements only. Following this attack, residents from the Sinhalese settlements started to move toward their native localities. The actual casualty figures of the soldiers is unknown.

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Sri Lankan troops launched dastardly missile attacks toward Paduvankarai [name as transliterated] locality in the Batticaloa district. A number of civilian properties were damaged in yesterday's act of terrorism. Large numbers of civilians are leaving their native homes and moving to safer places.

Large numbers of Sri Lankan policemen have been deployed in downtown Colombo and its surrounding areas. Several roads frequented by government leaders have been closed to the public. A senior Sri Lankan police official stated that national independence day celebrations will be held tomorrow as planned, and that all security arrangements have been completed. Meanwhile, correspondents reported that panic is still prevailing in Colombo.

The Sri Lankan Government reduced the budget allocation for the maintenance and reconstruction of the agricultural section of Jaffna university, which is currently functioning in Kilinochchi. Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan Government, which announced that only employees of the agricultural section will be paid, has also asked these employees to go to Colombo to collect their salaries.

Civilians proceeding to Colombo via Vavuniya have been detained by Sri Lankan troops, and are being subjected to torture under the pretext of investigations. Troops, who seized the identity cards of civilians, destroyed several cards in front of the owners. After sending elders from among the travelers back to Omantai, the troops continue to detain the remaining travelers. At the same time, it has been reported that the troops did not allow any traveler from Colombo to go north on 31 January and 1 February.

Meanwhile, Kilinochchi Secretariat employees, entrusted with the task of accompanying food convoys, are subjected to high-handed behavior and assault by Sri Lankan troops at Vavuniya. An employee assigned to accompany food convoys was arrested on 31 January, but was later released following intervention by the Secretariat. At the same time, another employee from the food convoys was brutally attacked by Sri Lankan troops.

The thirst of the LTTE is the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

Sri Lankan Navy Apprehends 17 'Pirates' Following Sea Chase

BK0302121296 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 3 Feb 96

[Report by Panduka Senanayake — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Seventeen 'pirates' from a large group who attempted to board a ship in the outer harbour of Colombo were apprehended after a dramatic sea chase by the Sri Lanka Navy on Thursday evening [1 February].

According to naval sources, a patrol craft went into action on receipt of information from the pilot station about the attempt by a large group of men to board the merchant vessel 'Lia-P'. The 'pirates' in four fibre glass dinghies (FGD) and a vallam [small boat] had sped away on seeing the approaching naval craft.

The naval craft too had given chase forcing the pirates, numbering about 30, to beach their boats at Pamunugama, about 18 miles north of Colombo, and take to their heels.

Sailors on board the Naval craft were however able to intercept the slow moving vallam and apprehend it along with its five occupants. They were also able to recover the four FGDs with their powerful outboard motors with the assistance of the Pamunugama Police.

Pamunugama police also apprehended 12 more members of the group in a swift operation launched in the area. The police operation was conducted by teams led by OIC [Officer in Command] Somasiri Liyanage and Sub Inspectors Nandalal Pathmanada, Mahindasiri and Suresh.

Investigations have revealed that the group are from Palliyawatta in Wattala. Investigators believe that a big time businessman may be behind the group.

Harbour 'Pirates' have been a thorn in the side of the Colombo Port authorities for many years with frequent raids on vessels that have led to the loss of valuable cargo and other items from these ships.

Sri Lanka: 'Serious' Row With Australia Over Security for Cricket Team

BK0602122796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Sri Lanka has offered a compromise to Australia to allow it to play its opening World Cup match in Colombo as the cricket controversy between the two countries escalated into a serious

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diplomatic row. Sri Lanka says it will provide the Australian team with security normally reserved for a visiting head of state and that they would have to remain in the country only as long as it takes to play the one-day match on the 17th of this month. Sports Minister S.B. Dissanayake also agreed to fly out the Sri Lankan team to India to play scheduled practice match before the actual one-day game in Colombo.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told a news conference yesterday that they had not had a response yet to this latest offer. The Australian Cricket Board yesterday pulled out of the match in Sri Lanka, citing security concerns. Mr. Kadirgamar said that the Australians could stay in India or in the Maldives instead of Colombo. Helicopters would fly them from the international airport to their hotel. The day of the match the route from the hotel to the nearby Premadasa Stadium would be declared out of (?bounds). The government was planning blanket security cover for the cricket grounds and the immediate neighborhood, while no spectators would be allowed to bring parcels to the stadium.

The minister also warned Australia that any attempt to persuade the other three countries scheduled to play in Colombo — Kenya, West Indies, and Zimbabwe — to join the boycott would be treated as a hostile act. [passage omitted]

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